On Tramp
Among the Mongols

ONE OF OUR LAMA GUIDES IN THE PLAINS.

(Page 102)

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AMONG THE MONGOLS

BY THE

REV. JOHN HEDLEY, F.R.G.S.

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To

My Wife

Who Trusted

While I Tramped

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MAP OF ROUTE AT END OF BOOK

On Tramp among the Mongols.

INTRODUCTORY.

Preparations for a long journey in China are almost as exciting as the actual journey itself and in their own way certainly quite as fatiguing. Unless one is prepared to live on the land—and that would sometimes mean going to bed with "an aching void"—you must see that your boxes contain a good supply of provisions, such as tea, coffee, cocoa, flour, tinned meats and vegetables, and all those sundry "etceteras" that on the road make all the difference between stern privation and the irreducible minimum of comfort. And since it is rarely possible to secure the uninterrupted use of Chinese cooking boilers, he who takes his own provisions must take his own cooking utensils. Pots and pans; kettle and teapot; cups and plates—and if you are at all fastidious, or what is equally important have your boxes packed by a tidy housewife—tablecloth and serviettes are indispensable adjuncts to your baggage. Nor need it be said that your own camp-bed and bedding are essentials; that if you wish to preserve even in your travels some degree of that cleanliness of body for which the Westerner in China is famed, a few changes of underclothing are desiderata. So that the days prior to your start see your house in a turmoil of topsy-turveydom, or, as the Chinese would put it, "luan ch'i pa tsao" (everything at sevens and eights). Here is a "chow-box" with its Danish butter and Swiss milk; its pickles and its jams; there a portmanteau with its miscellaneous contents, ranging from lead pencils to an extra suit of clothes, the latter intended for "better days and Sundays"; and somewhere else that elastic and accommodating article of Chinese manufacture known as a "ju-t'ao" (travelling bed bag), in which your bedding must be packed and which, lying conveniently open to the last, forms a handy receptacle for the hundred and one things that are apt to be forgotten or crowded out of the more elegant and respectable carriers. For in the regions to be traversed by the wanderer in inland China, there are neither Astor Houses nor Grand Hotels, and the man who neglects to look ahead and provide for all sorts of possible and some impossible contingencies on the way, would be likely to find himself in "queer street" before he had been on the road a week, and would register many solemn vows that he would never again be so short-sighted.

Hence the "Jag" of preparing, which was the condition of things in a quiet missionary home near the Great Wall

in April last, when the writer was making ready for a two month's tramp among the Mongols. Among our servants there was unbounded curiosity as to the route to be travelled, the work to be done, and most important of all—who was to accompany the master? For there is no common proverb current among the Chinese that is oftener quoted by servants of travelling foreigners than that which says "Tsai chia ch'ien jih hao; ch'u men shih shih nan" (At home for a thousand days is good; abroad everything is difficult). There is no excess of zeal in this direction on the part of one's numerous "boys"; they have no burning ambition to "k'ai yên" (open their eyes); least of all do they relish a trip "k'ou wai" (outside the passes); where food is, according to them, both poor and dear; where brigands abound and wolves are given to prowling; and where mountain climbs add weariness, if not interest to the trip.

My object in taking this journey was two-fold; partly geographical research, and partly missionary investigation. The recent war between Japan and Russia has made the Liaoho familiar by name to thousands of people in all parts of the world, and many who can talk glibly of Liaotung and Liaohsi may not be quite so certain of the fact that by these designations are meant respectively, the Eastern and Western districts of the Liao River, that broad and lengthy stream that flows past Mukden and Liaoyang, before it empties itself into the sea at the treaty-port of Newchwang. This river under the name of Laoho (old river) before it reaches Manchuria traverses for about 400 miles parts of Outer Chihli and Mongolia, and it was suggested to the writer that a trip into that region would give us for the first time, accurate information of a tract of country that had never been surveyed and mapped by any Western traveller. Geographically, then, my purposes were:—

1.—To explore the Laoho from near its source to its junction with the Shiramuren, a large river which may be noted on all maps of the Chinese Empire, flowing from West to East for several hundred miles.

2.—To explore the main route from the junction of these two rivers to an important barter-market named K'ulukou, which lies some 130 miles West of Mukden, on the great road between that city and Dolonor, or Lamamiao.

3.—To survey the direct road from K'ulukou to the cities of Ch'aoyang and Chinchoufu, at which latter place we were to join the Imperial Railways of North China, and so consider our tour at an end.

An alternative or additional route was to take us in a N. W. direction from the junction of the two rivers named above to the large and important Mongol settlement of Barin, a place in the "ts'ao ti" (grass land), from whence come so many of the sturdy ponies that China boasts. We found, however, that to reach Barin and return would have meant almost doubling our mileage, and with many wistful looks in its direction, we had regretfully to abandon the idea.

From the missionary point of view, it was my hope to make first-hand investigations of the conditions and prospects of evangelistic labour among the

people who inhabit the districts I was to traverse, and while, owing to ignorance of the language spoken there, and the fact that we had to push along in order to cover the ground in our available time, it was not possible to do much in the way of preaching, yet we opened up a furrow that may some day be followed and extended by others, and came back with a tolerably accurate knowledge of the district, its difficulties and its claims.

I have ventured to give to my story the title of "On Tramp Among the Mongols." But Mongolia is so vast a country, a land of such immense distances that it is incumbent on me, for truth's sake, to say here that in our 800 miles tramp we touched only the bare fringe of its deserts, and came into close contact with but an infinitesimal number of its people. As a matter of fact, though we were traveling in Mongolia, we were never actually out of the official territory of Chihli province; save on two occasions. The first was when for some ten miles we followed the course of the Liaoho, after passing the confluence of the Laoho and the Shiramuren. And the second was when we were within one day of finishing our long trip, and crossed the Ancient Palisade which, some thirty miles from Chinchoufu, still marks the boundary of the two provinces of Chihli and Fêngtien. I am afraid that later on I shall have to make it clear that the jurisdiction of Chihli province and its magistrates is but a very nominal affair in those regions. So far as effectual administration is concerned, it is a case of (in Chinese phrase) "yu ming wu shih" (the name without the fact). There is practically no attempt made to deal with evils that cry loudly for redress. In many places visited by us a magistrate has never once been seen, and the only appearance of authority, that prevails is vested in the princes of the various Mongol banners which occupy the country. In one place, two hundred miles from the "hsien" cit and a purely Chinese settlement, we were told that anything brought before the notice of the Chinese official is systematically ignored, and the only remedy the people have when litigation is necessary, is to wend their way to the palace of the Mongol Prince, where, by a judicious plan of "palm-greasing," "shui yu ch'ien, chiu yu li" (He who has money has right). Yet still the fiction of official authority is kept up and the most remote settlement we touched was said to be part of Ch'ihfênghsien, a country of Outer Chihli, under the Tartar-General of Ch'êngtofu, (Jehol).

Travelling in what for great part of the way is described on British, German and French maps as "unexplored territory," it was highly desirable that the route should be properly mapped. Here I was fortunate in being specially favoured with the assistance of a competent Indian surveyor, who made a most careful and painstaking plane-table traverse of our route. For this I am indebted to Lieut.-Colonel A. W. S. Wingate, and Captain F. G. Turner, R.E., the officers in charge of the Intelligence Branch of the British forces in occupation in North China, who kindly placed this man at my disposal. Since our return, the map illustrating these articles has been compiled under the supervision of the latter gentleman. Moreover these officers also kindly

lent me all necessary instruments and maps, so that I was much better equipped for effective work than if I had been entirely dependent on my own slender resources. In addition to the instruments, I carried two of my own cameras, one, a half-plate Lancaster tripod, "an old China hand" that has been with me wherever I have gone during the past nine years, and has now almost earned superannuation: the other, a 1905 No. 3 Cartridge Kodak, quarter-plate size, than which a better instrument for the road can scarcely be imagined or desired. This latter, combined with my Kodak developing machine and outfit, which enables one to develop films even in a Chinese inn or Mongolian hut, ensured a large quantity of excellent pictures illustrative of both people and land, which will make permanent and pleasant reminders of a fatiguing but delightful journey. For the first time in my China travels, I was not nearly so successful with my half-plate camera. The sand and dust of the Mongolian deserts had subtle and insidious ways of getting through my bag and into my shutters, with the inevitable result of pinpricks and smuts which have effectively spoiled all hopes of good pictures. A borrowed shot-gun for stray pheasants or hares, and a healthy-sized revolver for I don't know what, completed my equipment. Of the use made of them I shall speak later.

Such was my equipment, modest enough in all truth; yet sufficient with the bedding and baggage of myself and men, to make fairly heavy loads for five strong mules. These last were hired by the day, and accompanied us the entire round trip. When first I saw them, I was quite pleased with their sturdy appearance, giving me, as they did, the assurance that they would be equal to all the demands made upon them. Strong enough they proved themselves to be without a doubt, but they also proved themselves to be a quintette of the most stupid and stubborn of their species it has ever been my lot to come near. Their varied performances on the way were at times enough to try the proverbial patience of a certain Old Testament patriarch, had he been there and formed one of our company. One of these mules, a finely built and strong yellow brute, had a most unfortunate affection for every horse he met on the road; no sooner did he see one than he would lift up his voice and cry almost like a human being, and had to be led every step of the way lest he should get both himself and his owner into mischief. A small dainty chestnut had the mincing walk and timid ways of a society belle, and wanted to throw his load and do a bolt if anyone strange approached him, or anything unusual met his eye. A third, the largest of all, and grey in colour, would wander off the road into the fields in the most exasperating manner. Of the other two, not much need be said just now. Their little peculiarities came out on the way, and the quietest and best of all distinguished itself for ever in my mind by lying down in the Laoho one day with my old portmanteau and food-box, with such results as may be imagined. How many times the loads were thrown and our march delayed I cannot even pretend to say, and do not like to think.

The muleteer proved himself to be the most trying member of our party, and was perhaps the one man of all our company who caused anything like

ill-temper. He was a dull, country yokel, whose days and years are spent in monotonous, unchanging tramps among the hills and valleys adjacent to the Great Wall, always urging on before him, or dragging behind him, his refractory mules. His name was Li Hung-yi, which I at once transposed into Li Hung-chang, an exaltation that did not seem to afford him much pleasure. He was heavy of countenance and sullen of soul, stubborn as one of his own mules in temper, and yet wonderfully glib of tongue when his "dander" was up, and he engaged in one of his numerous arguments or disputes. He tramped the weary way with the gait and the intelligence of an ox, took no more interest in what he saw (though it was mostly all new ground to him) than the animals he led. Only once did I know him to quicken his pace, and that was when he thought the brigands were upon us. Mountain-pass and river-bed were to him only additional obstacles in the way, which he was paid to cross, and I believe that if he were now asked the name of any place we stopped at, the only possible means of recollection he would have would gather round the amounts he paid for food and fodder. He worried me more than a little while he was in my service, and there were times when his pig-headedness made me feel anything but angelic in temper, but now in retrospect I have only pity for the poor fellow when I think of his cramped life, his humdrum existence. To rise early and rest late; to tramp the whole day long and every day, leading his mules as he goes, anxious only as to how much he is likely to make out of the job he has undertaken; fearful lest some cute innkeeper should charge him too heavily for what he needs must buy; he and hundreds like him in this northern district are content so to go on year in and year out, with never a thought above corn or cash and too tired in an evening even to visit a strolling theatre that may be performing in the town or village he stays at. Small wonder he did not understand a hustling foreigner, and caused him many anxious moments.

The most important of the five men who accompanied me was of course the Indian surveyor Marisami, a slightly-built, good-looking, and—what was to the point—good-tempered young Madrasi of thirty years of age. He had formerly been a sergeant of the 28th Madras Infantry, and came to China first in 1900 with his regiment, when he was stationed at Weihaiwei. Returning to India in 1901, he gave up soldiering when his regiment was disbanded, entered the Government Survey College, where he served two or three years, and in the summer of 1905, came to China a second time attached to the Intelligence Branch as a surveyor. He proved himself a most interesting companion, with a large fund of tales of his experiences as a soldier in Madras and Burma. He described himself as a lonely man, with neither friends nor relatives, his wife having recently been carried off by the plague, while his father, a few years ago, fell a victim to cholera. His English, though by no means perfect, was sufficiently good to enable us to have long chats together, and I was dependent on his company for providing the only relaxation I had from the necessity of continually talking Chinese, mixed up with some mongrel Mongolian. Of his work as a surveyor this is not the place to speak, save to say that

there seemed to be nothing in connection with his duties with which he was not fully conversant, and—I will venture to add this—whenever the route we travelled is followed by other travellers, there will be found comparatively few errors to correct, either in contouring or nomenclature.

Marisami (his name he told me was that of a famous Hindu god) was of course of black skin, and naturally enough in a district where foreigners are never seen, attracted no little attention. But only in one place did I hear any critical or uncomplimentary remarks concerning his colour, and that was when a company of Manchu women (much bolder than their Chinese sisters) clustered in a room at a country inn among the mountains asked me to explain the difference between Marisami and myself. Indeed, so far from criticising him were the people that he established himself as a prime favourite wherever he went. He had such such a bright, kindly face and such a friendly manner with all the Chinese that even the little children would venture near and stare at him with both eyes and mouth wide open. His halting Chinese, and his heroic attempts to learn Mongolian (he succeeded here better than any of us) were sources of great amusement to all his numerous hearers, and he can fairly claim the credit of having trodden over a tract of formerly unexplored country, and by his unfailing good-nature and urbanity, done much to disabuse the minds of the people of that strange notion they got, viz., that of all the "foreign devils" who come to China's shores the "black devils" are the most fierce.

Next to him as my writer I took a trusted colporteur of the British and Foreign Bible Society, a young fellow of my own training, named Wêng Ch'ang-shou. This man had accompanied me on a trip some eighteen months before in the Jehol district, and then proved himself so good and uncomplaining a traveller that I had no hesitation in setting aside my own "bookish" teacher in favour of him when I wanted not only one "with the pen of a ready writer," but one who on occasion could walk his fifteen or twenty miles a day, and not fall out by reason of the "weariness of the way". Wêng, (his full name means literally, The Venerable who lives for ever) is a sturdy chap of thirty-seven, and ordinarily thinks nothing of going off in the early morning to a distant fair or market with his pack on his back, spending the day on the streets preaching the Gospel and selling copies of the Scriptures, and then toiling home in the evening, hungry and tired, thankful if he has sold enough to pay his meagre expenses, and glad at heart at having put in circulation a few extra copies of the Divine Word. He is one of that humble army of Gospel scouts who are doing not a little to bring the truth to China, whose work is frequently noticed only to be criticised, but who will have to be counted in among the effective forces when "the roll is called". He can give a "good reason for the hope that is in him," is no mean scholar, and on this journey was invaluable. His principal duty was to secure the correct name and characters of every village we passed through, every temple and pagoda we noted; to interrogate the passers-by,

for reasons of comparison, as to the distances between various places, and generally speaking, to act as our Intelligence Officer all the way along, gleaning all kinds of information as to routes, rivers, passes, etc. That we have a complete, and, as I believe, correct record of every town, village and hamlet we passed, is due in the first instance to the industry of this man.

The route-traverse being done with a plane-table meant that a man was necessary to carry that instrument all the way. For the information of the uninitiated, I may here say that a plane-table is simply a square piece of wood screwed on to a heavy hard-wood tripod. On the board is pinned a large sheet of drawing-paper. These with a pencil and a ruler constitute the plane-table surveyor's equipment, and with careful observations at every turn of the road, together with careful calculations of time and distance, a competent man can make an exact sketch of the route traversed, no matter how long that route may be. But the plane-table at best is a heavy and cumbersome article and requires a man of muscle, and one well capable of fatigue to carry it all day long and every day, and have it ready for use whenever a new observation has to be made. For this hard task I had chosen, through the kindness of my medical colleague, the door-keeper of our Mission Hospital. He is a sinewy and willing fellow of twenty-seven, named Yuan Min, who possessed the extra qualification of having tramped to Barin on his own account a year before. Ont the road with us, he was the mos untiring and indefatigable of helpers, always coming up with a smile, and shouldering his heavy burden in most cheerful fashion. We christened him Yuan Kungpao, after the famous Viceroy of Chihli, and as the Chinese name of Marisami was Ma, it was easy to dub *him* Ma Kungpao, in honour of the Commander-in-Chief of the Chinese forces outside the Wall, and bracket these two together as two of the most noted men in China.

The last of my company was my cook, Sung Shu-fêng by name, who since he had a mule to ride all the way, and nothing to do but get my meals ready, had really the easiest time of us all. Thus we were six men in all, the present writer being the oldest and the tallest, and it says perhaps much for the adaptability of the oriental (we, will not speak of the occidental here) that they toiled and tramped together for nearly two months, over some of the worst roads that man could find, with many a time very insufficient or unpalatable food, and yet had no more serious disagreements among themselves than the trivial discussions that gathered round an extra bowl of millet, or a second draught of water.

For my own use and comfort, I had with me a sturdy Mongolian pony I have ridden for many years, who bears the German name of Hansel, and who on many a trip has been both slave and friend. He has as stable companion, a little donkey named Neddy, only two years old, and the pet and property of the youngest member of my family. This little creature has become so much attached to his larger friend, the pony, that he frets and fumes if they are parted for half-an-hour. I therefore allowed him to follow us, and he served now and again to give the Chinese writer a lift along the roads when they became specially weary,

and kept close at the heels of Hansel for the entire eight-hundred miles. His following us so closely gave rise to much amusement on the part of both Chinese and Mongols, and though he is not conscious of having had "greatness thrust upon him," yet he formed the topic of many a quaint enquiry and many a hearty laugh.

It only here remains to be said that before starting I had taken the precaution of having my passport renewed, and on it noted the name of every district through which I hoped to travel. By the favour of the British Consul-General at Tientsin, the Chinese authorities had also been notified of my intended tour, and so I guarded myself against the possibility of any wordy wars with officials in distant places. And if the readers of this journal have only patience enough to follow my narrative as it appears, it may be that all who are interested in every addition, however slight, to the world's knowledge, will learn something of a district that prior to my visit, had never been traversed by any Western traveller.

The morning of April 21 broke very dull and cloudy, and many were the gloomy prognostications of a drenching before we reached our resting-place that night. But though a slight rain fell intermittently throughout the day, it was never heavy enough to cause us any alarm, or delay us on this, our first day's tramp. We had arranged to start the mules off with the baggage at six o'clock, but our muleteer gave us a first taste of his quality by turning up over an hour late, so that it was fully 7.30 before they got away. I followed an hour later on my pony, and caught them before they had gone more than six miles.

We were to stay that evening at Chienchʻanyoing, a walled market town under the shadow of the Great Wall; passing through a small market village named Hêngho, and having our midday meal at a still smaller place called Langkochuang. The road we traversed is a very pretty one, leading over undulating country and touching at several points the Chʻinglungho, (Bright Dragon River) which, rising among the hills south of Tʻatzukou, and flowing through the Great Wall at Tʻaolinkʻou (Peach Grove Pass) joins the famous Lanho at my own city of Yungpʻingfu. This river, though holding but little water, and being too shallow for even flat-bottomed boats to get any further north than sixty li above Yungpʻingfu, yet forms a natural and handy outlet for the roof-timbers that are floated down in rafts from the districts outside the Wall, while both on the main stream and on some of its many smaller branches beyond the Wall it is deep enough to enable the people to build incense mills over the stream, where, turned by a water-wheel by the force of the flowing river, trees are slowly ground down into fine power, and then made up into incense sticks for sale, principally in Manchuria.

Our first day's tramp was without incident, save that in passing Hêngho we were all much interested in watching an old woman between sixty and seventy years of age, very busily engaged in private worship with incense and numerous prostrations on the sand that forms the bed of the river. There seemed, however, to be no shrine, no temple and no grave near enough to justify the old lady's excessive devotion, and moved by a very natural curiosity,

I ventured to ask her in one of her pauses, what was her special object in worshipping there. She naively replied that she was worshipping in the direction of a temple some few miles away on the west side of the river, too far for her to go all the distance that day, and so she was adopting this method of performing her devotions, believing doubtless—and here I am heartily in agreement with her—that her worship would be just as effectual there on the bank of the river as it would have been had she, on her cramped feet, toddled the four or five miles of rough and stony road to the temple itself. The alert manner, however, in which she reached for her pipe, and lit up in front of her sticks of burning incense, showed that she had in her heart thoughts that were "of the earth, earthy," and as she turned away puffing the blue smoke out of her lips, there was a smirk of satisfaction on her comely face, which gave token, from her point of view, of "something attempted, something done." Marisami, my Indian companion, who had been as much interested as I was, turned away with the remark, "Why, they do in China exactly as our idolators do in India."

At the village of Langkochuang, where we had our meal in the solitary and poor inn the place boasts, the old innkeeper loudly proclaimed his inability to attend to his guests because he was "hê tsui liao" (drunk). From room to room, and thence into the yard where the animals were feeding, he staggered with maudlin gaze and husky speech, giving always and to all he stumbled against the same information. Luckily for us he had a son who was not just then following his father's example, and we were able to get all we needed for man and beast, and get away without much delay in the afternoon.

The latter part of this day's march led us along a beautifully-wooded path by the side of the river, till we came to the appropriately-named village of Ch'ingshanyuan (Bright Hill Garden), where the Ch'inglungho flows in from the east, and is joined by the Shaho, (Sand River), a small stream that comes in at Lêngk'ou.

Chiench'angying is one of the busiest market towns within easy reach of Yungp'ingfu, and has a large population gathered within and without its walls. The walls themselves are in a parlous condition of disrepair, which does not surprise you when you learn that the last time they were repaired was in 1601, being the 28th year of Wan Li, one of the last and worst of the Ming Emperors. But happily the condition of the walls affects not at all the briskness of the business, and here within ten li of the Great Wall, there is a prosperous and flourishing town, where grain, flour, fuel and timber are sold every fifth day in large quantities. Chian ch'angying (which must be distinguished from Chiench'anghsien, of which more anon) is in the jurisdiction of the Ch'ienan hsien, and is one of the many places in that wide county that gives to his-constantly-changing-Honour who governs the district the longed-for-opportunity of becoming rich. For some time during the war in Manchuria, a few companies of cavalry belonging to the Viceroy's army were stationed in the town, but now they have all been withdrawn from the smaller towns, and concentrated in the three cities of Yungp'ing, Ch'ienan, and Funing. The bulk of these

troops, (which form the Second Division of the Luchün), including all the artillery, are settled at Ch'ienan, where the Lieut-General has his headquarters; at Yungp'ing there are six battalions, or 3,600 infantry; while Funing, seventy li nearer to Shanaikuan, has three or four battalions of cavalry.

As you approach the region of the Great Wall, it is impossible not to notice the numbers of people who are suffering from goitre, many of them with large and ugly swellings on the neck, the growth of twenty, thirty and even forty years. Women appear to be most generally subject to the malady, though the stronger sex make no small showing. The same state of things prevails for perhaps 150 li beyond the Wall, when the cases become perceptibly fewer. Thus it is mainly in the region where the hills are highest that goitre is most commonly found. The Chinese call it "ka-ta" a strange approximation to our name for it; are unanimously of opinion that it is quite harmless, though unpleasant; and themselves generally account for it by the presence of lime in the water that is available for all household purposes among the hills.

Ten li from Chienchʻangying, on the following morning we reached Lêngkʻou (Cold Pass), at which point we were to pass through the Wall and turn our backs on what some people call the civilised part of the Chihli province. As we approached the Wall that morning between seven and eight o'clock there was a very rare cloud-effect visible on the hills. White fleecy mists hung over the highest peaks as if gently caressing them or shielding them from the rays of the rising sun.

So beautiful was the picture that with all the enthusiasm of the amateur photographer, I urged on my men in the hope of getting near enough for a "snap" before the tussle between cloud and sun had ended. But clouds cannot long fight against King Sol, and before we were within "shooting" distance, the picture was a thing of memory only, and my desperate attempt to photograph it at a distance was the reverse of satisfactory.

Lêngkʻou is one of the most interesting of the many passes which are to be found in this all-too-rarely-visited section of the Great Wall. It is also one of the busiest, as having a cart-road through it, on which there is constant traffic. Here also is found a native custom house, where all sorts of merchandise, save only books, have to submit to examination and taxation, and where doubtless the five or six men in charge find a short and easy cut to comparative wealth. On the Chienchʻangying market days, the traffic through Lêngkʻou is very considerable. Villagers bring in their produce for sale, fuel and fruit forming a large proportion of it; men carry in their heavy loads on their shoulders, or drive before them grunting and squealing pigs, than which a more unwilling traveller does not exist; mules and donkeys groan beneath the loads of kaoliang stalks, willow, poplar or oak branches, etc., and pass through in a constant stream from early morn till about ten o'clock. About two in the afternoon the tide turns in the other direction, and the same people and animals are seen returning to their homes, their commodities disposed of and taking back with them their purchases of foreign cloth, American oil or sundry vegetables, intended either for their personal use

EAST WALL, YUNGP'INGFU, NEAR MISSION COMPOUND.

MY FIVE ASSISTANTS ON THE JOURNEY.

VILLAGE OF LÈNGK'ON, SHOWING ARCH IN GREAT WALL.

at home, or for sale in the multitudinous hamlets and villages that nestle among the mountains on the other side.

At Lêngk'ou, the tower of the Great Wall that once spanned the stream is now no longer in existence, having been carried away by floods in 1850. Its place is taken by a barrier made of inverted poles in the style common to many official yamêns, while on either side of the river the wall climbs in silent though dilapidated grandeur up the lofty hills. The eastern side is particularly characteristic of the Great Wall architecture, and eloquent, even in its ruin, of the difficulties that had to be overcome when, over 2,200 years ago, Chinshih Huang-ti, the first Emperor of United China, impressed his people into this duty of protecting the Empire against the possible attacks of Manchu and Mongol hordes. The Wall here rises perpendicularly up the face of the hill for several hundred feet, and one can only wonder how men managed even to gain a foothold there, to say nothing of laying in place huge, heavy blocks of dressed stones, and bricks of a size that are never manufactured now. I have seen a boy gathering fuel on that hill, and crawling up the face of the Wall much as a fly might crawl up the wall of a house. But it is not a pastime that I would care to imitate.

FROM YUNGP'INGFU TO T'APZUKOU.

You no sooner get beyond Lêngk'ou than you are conscious of a great change in the character of the landscape. It is a different country to which you are now introduced, rougher roads and rugged crags thrusting themselves upon your notice. But what is much more pleasing is the well-wooded appearance of the district. Whereas within the Wall, trees for the most part are seen only surrounding the villages, the hills being almost entirely bare; outside, the hills are all thickly studded with graceful poplars, slender willows, and sturdy firs, while further on when you come into the region of the Poloshan (Oak-tree Hills) a species of small mountain oak adds beauty of another kind, and provides the inhabitants with a cheap and plentiful supply of fuel all the year round. This continues for over two hundred li in an almost direct line, right up to the village of Chêch'angkou, after which you pass into a succession of valleys that have nought to offer for your admiration beyond meandering streams and massive mountains.

Just outside Lêngk'ou, the stream already spoken of as the Shaho, enables the villagers to cultivate a species of brown rice called "taomi," a coarse grain which forms a staple food in that locality, but which the people infinitely prefer before the white rice that comes up from warmer climates.

At one of the villages some seven miles beyond Lêngk'ou, named T'angchangtze (Bath Camp), there is a small mineral spring about three feet deep, much patronised by the natives for its comforting warmth of temperature, as well as for its excellent medicinal qualities. The popular theory there which accounts for the warm water is that there is a fire underground which heats the water to boiling point, when it rises to the surface by the force of the heat and springs up out of the ground at this place.

The road tends to become rougher as we advance. We pass through Hsiaoyingtze (the Small Barracks) where for the first time we see a Manchu village. The women with their natural-sized feet and ruddy faces (the one is always accompanied by the other), remind us of the fact that there are women in China who need not to compress their feet in order to gain husbands and bear sons. We stop this day at the small village of Hsiatahutien (the Lower Village where they beat the Tiger), where we stayed eighteen months before in a clean and commodious inn which nestles under a high and tree-crowned hill. We are only just in time to escape a wetting, for at 2.45 thunder begins to peal around the

hills, a sudden gale of wind roars in the trees, and for some hours we have a quiet but steady downpour of rain. We are only 550 feet above the level of the sea, but all round us are hills ranging in height from 2,000 to 4,000 feet, while away to the north we see towering above all else, the King of Mountains in this district, the T'ushan (Earth Mountain) 8,000 feet high.

The rain of this evening has considerably cooled the atmosphere, so that when we start off at six next morning, the thermometer only registers 30°, and so cold do we find it out of doors that Marisami after taking his first bearing starts off at the double, and does a couple of li at a sharp trot before he gets himself warmed up. We pass through several beautifully situated villages, one, Wutsoshan, being set in an almost ideal position in the midst of five lofty hills, from which it takes its name. In front of the village is a typical English green, where an old cricketer imagines he can see a fine pitch. The broad open space is surrounded by a number of tall poplars, which cast a grateful shade over the green grass, and doubtless make the spot a welcome one for the daily siesta in which all the villagers indulge themselves in the summer. After going about seven miles, we turn off from the cart-road up a by-path that leads us past a very fine though, small temple literally built on a massive rock, which towers fully two hundred feet above the road. This valley is named Fok'ankou (Buddha Cliff Valley) and it gives us our first pass to negotiate 880 feet, where in the compound of the solitary house at the top of the pass, there are several pretty pear-trees in bloom.

Immediately after this, we reach the Manchu village of T'ushihmên (Earth-Rock-Gate), which I distinctly remember passing through in 1904. This time we stop for breakfast at a small wayside inn, and I am allowed the privilege of resting and having my morning meal when it is ready, in one of the private rooms of the landlord's house. This arrangement, while very welcome to me, seems a matter of unbounded delight to all the Manchu ladies of the village. They come "not as single spies only, but in battalions," and the poor foreigner has to submit quietly to hold a sort of levee in his room, while the ladies with all the airs and assurance of connoisseurs, make audible comments on my appearance, my blue eyes, my "ginger" moustache, my leather boots and leggings, etc., etc., and display the keenest interest in all I have, all I say, and much that I neither say nor possess. The leader of this "bevy of beauties" is the landlord's daughter, a bright and by no means shy girl of seventeen, with considerably more than the average spice of mischief in her Oriental make-up. She is most assiduous in her attentions to the "stranger within their gates," and seems more than ordinarily anxious to make me feel at ease. While my meal is preparing, she keeps bringing me one dainty after another, most of them, alas, unpalatable, if for nothing else than that the flies have been playing "rounders" on them for hours, if not days. When all, or most, of her efforts at hospitality are respectfully declined, she suddenly appears with a plate of peaches in her hand, and asks if I will not eat some of these. There is a specially mischievous twinkle in her eyes this time, and a glance at the

peaches serves to show that they are false, and that this daring young lady with the rosy cheeks, which almost rival the bloom on the false peaches (though hers was not false) is trying to "pull the leg" of the foreigner. A little later, my own meal is brought in, but my room is still occupied by several of these Manchu women, who, with none of that stupid shyness common to Chinese womanhood, are determined to have a good look at the "rara avis" that has flown into their dovecote this day. This in a chance of a lifetime, and they are bent on making the most of it. I adopt the Oriental method of getting rid of unwelcome visitors; that is, I cordially invite them to sit down and honourably deign to share my contemptible meal. They decline with native grace (and who can beat the Chinese at that?), but they made no attempt to move. Now, one cannot take a woman by the shoulders and put her out of the room, especially when she is very much present tense and plural number. So, my ruse failing, I venture to ask them in my most dulcet tones whether they will not kindly retire into the next room while I eat my food. "We foreigners, you know, are very foolish, and so unlike the wise people who live in China. We do not like to be watched while we are eating. When I have finished I shall be delighted to be honoured by your company again." They troop out with a loud chorus of approval at the perfect manners of this foreigner, and I forthwith attack my pork and potatoes. But I am not far through before my young lady of the inn is back at the door watching with wondering awe the manipulation of knife and fork, and doubtless thinking how marvellous it is that I do not accidentally cut my throat or spear my tongue. Again I appeal to her:—"Now, little sister, said I not to you that we foreigners like to eat our food without being watched?" "Yes, big brother, that you did, but why do you object to your little sister looking at you?" "Oh, the fact of being watched in this way makes me "hai sao" (ashamed). To which she archly replies: "Why, you have nothing to be ashamed of. Your manner of eating food is "shih tsai pu k'ê ch'ên" (is certainly not unpleasant to see)." After such a compliment as this from a young lady, and paid too in so artless a fashion, I should be a curmudgeon of the worst type to protest any longer, so there is nothing for it but to make the best of my circumstances, and allow "my little sister" and the others to gratify their curiosity to the full.

After the meal is over, their curiosity takes another turn. "Has the august stranger a wife?" "Why, yes, of course". And what is she like? Is she 'hao-k'an" (good to see)?' That surely is a question that needs no answer from me, and I have no difficulty in making them understand what is my opinion of the queen of my home. "Indeed, and is she anything like us?" This question puts me into somewhat of a quandary. To say "No" outright might hurt the delicate sensibilities of my questioners, for have I not just said what I think of my wife? And yet one can scarcely imagine a greater contrast than between these dark and dirty beauties with the oiled and glossy hair, and blue cotton trousers; and a Western lady of fair complexion and golden locks. But my visitors are not to be put off with any subterfuges. They have *never* seen a

foreign lady in their lives, and although they have not even heard of Mother Eve, they are not one whit behind her in curiosity. And when at length one of them, knowing I am an amateur photographer (for have I not already had two snaps at them), asks me if have not a photograph of my wife to show them, I produce one for their inspection. It is not a thing I would elect to do, but after all, it will afford a little diversion to these women among the hills, and no one is likely to be the worse for it. It is difficult, however, to gauge their impressions. Most of them, if not all, have never seen a photograph of any kind before, for here they are as effectually out of the world as they would be at the North Pole. One noticed the hairs brushed right up from the forehead; another the shape of the eyes; a third, with a taste for fashions, draws attention to the lace collar on the dress and so on. All have a good look at the only representation of an English lady they are ever likely to see, and when at last the picture is handed back to me, it is with the oracular remark:—"Wai kuoa fu jen chiu shih na moa ke yang tzu ni" (Foreign women are just of that kind, are they)? Quite evidently they all prefer their own style of beauty. And why should I seek to make them prefer mine?

From T'ushihmên onward we come in for a succession of passes. T'ushihmên itself, 900 feet; and Tashihmên (Great-Rock Gate) 980 feet, and only five li further on, are both narrow defiles cut out of the solid rock, and not more than eight feet wide at their widest parts. A few more li, and at Hsiao and Tach'iutzekou respectively, we come on two more passes, 1,180 and 1,100 feet, and find them exceedingly difficult to negotiate, not only because of a steep and sudden rise, but principally because the ground is full of "peaky" stones peeping up in such profusion that walking in comfort is impossible for either animals or men. He would indeed be a reckless rider who thought so little of his skin or his steed as not to dismount while climbing up or crawling down either of these passes.

Two miles beyond Tach'iutzekou, we reach Tachangtze (Great Camp) the first market town we have seen since leaving Chiench'angying. This town of one street is in the centre of a lawless district, and as a consequence has stationed here a company of the "Huai Chün," the regiment once known in the North as "Li Hung-chang's lambs." On my previous visit, I had been received and entertained by the officer in charge, Lieut. Chiang Yi-shan. He is said to be still in the town, but as we have no time to visit him properly, we march through without stopping, and are well clear of the town before any of his men have realised the passing of a foreigner.

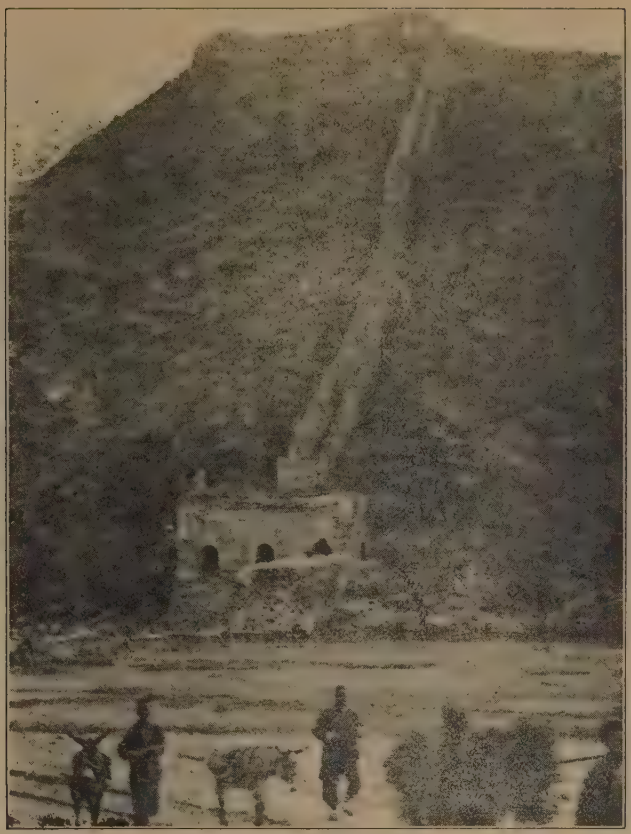
Just beyond Tachangtzu the road bifurcates, and it is very easy for the traveller new to the road to go astray. That to the East, which looks the natural path to take, leads to Shuangshan (Double Hill) fifty li away, a fine market town, from whence are sent so many of the roof-timbers that find their way down the Ch'inglungho to Yungp'ing, Lanchou and Laot'ing. There also are a few companies of the "Huai Chün," stationed to keep in check the bandits who occasionally make a raid south of their usual haunts.

Our own road reads 77° N. E., and holding on that way we reach in time another pass named Lot'oling (Camel

Pass) seventy li from our morning starting-point, and where we find an inn commodious and comfortable enough to induce us to rest for the night. At the Eastern end of the pass is a pretty temple erected in honour of the god of war; the keeper, however, combines business with worship, as the space in front is packed with roof-timbers, cut down and properly trimmed and all ready for the carts that will some day come and return the timbers into "ch'ien" (cash) or "yintzu" (silver).

Our route on the 24th is one of the most interesting and fatiguing of this section. I have been twice over this way before and know pretty well what to expect, a vivid recollection of a weary tramp in the evening after a long march in 1904 serving to stamp almost every yard of that road with the familiar features of an old friend. At Kushantzu (The Lonely Hill), one mile from Lot'oling, there are four cross roads. The Southern road leads to Liuchiak'ou and Yungpingfu, but it is not a path I should advise anyone to take; the Northern to T'angtaoho (Fording Road River) and the T'ushan, while we are travelling on that which leads N. E. to Taoerhtêng and T'atzukou. At Machüantzu, a series of five villages bearing one name, we are in time to see the freqenters of a theatre dispersing in various directions; the performances had come to a close late the previous night. We overtake a few professional gamblers, with their cotton booth and gambling paraphernalia packed on a small donkey, while they trudge behind, making for some other temple fair further North, where an open-air theatre calls the crowds together, and the remote opportunity of making a few dollars easily leads the simple villager to stake string after string of cash on the revolving needle or the secreted marble. This system of professional gambling is all too common in all these northern districts. Men go out in parties of four, six and even at times ten, and make a regular circuit of all the important fairs that are held in connection with the temples every year. All and sundry are welcomed to their booths, where tea, pipes and tobacco are provided free. And here many a man loses in an hour what he cannot earn in a year, and though he may not have the ready cash to pay his "debts of honour" forthwith these harpies who have gulled him will quite gladly "hsiêh chang" (write it down on his debit account), and about the end of the year will call upon him at his home to pay up. I suppose there is never a temple fair held in North China where proclamations are not posted up, denouncing the gambling habit and all who practise it in unmeasured terms, and threatening all sorts of severe punishments for all who may be caught at the game. And there is never a temple fair held in North China where all such proclamations are not openly disregarded and defied, the presumption being that it is profitable to the yamên runners and petty officials to be "to the gambler's faults a little blind."

At Ch'êch'angkoumen (The Cart-Green Valley Gate) we come upon the first of our rough roads to-day, a species of road which is to last for another 100 li at least. One way leads from here almost due East to Kankou sixty miles away, the great grain-distributing centre which is exactly the same distance N. W. from Shanhaikuan. We, however, follow due West for about one



GREAT WALL AT LENGK'ON.

CUSTOM HOUSEAT LENGK'ON, SHOWING SECTIO OF GREAT WALL.

TEMPLE AT LOT'OLING.

PACK-MULES ASCENDING PAHAWCHIHLING.

mile a valley which in its higher parts provides a mild form of excitement in gold-washing, the people finding a modicum of the precious metal in the bed of the little stream. We turn off in a few minutes almost due North to Ch'êch'angkou, a small and wretched village which lies right in the heart of the hills, and looks as one advances as though it were to end in a *cul-de-sac.* Here we come upon a pass of the spiral staircase species, 960 feet high, from which we are not free till we have travelled three li. The hills tower up above us; the oak-trees are clustering on the sides; but as their new leaves have not yet appeared, they are not nearly so beautiful as when I saw them last. There are, however, a multitude of wild apricots in blossom on the hills, and up there in the heights their soft delicate texture gives the appearance of hoar-frost, and we almost look to see it melt away as the sun rises higher and gains more strength. There are also a great many wild pears on the hills, and during the day my writer Wông "who lives for ever," brings me a dainty pink blossom which he calls "T'engt'ailiho," of which I am too ignorant to give it either an English or a Latin name.

We have our morning meal at Changchiatien, and at noon set off up another valley that leads to the Paohuochihling (The Eight Terror Pass). Why it boasts such a name I cannot say, but I do know that it would be difficult in this neighbourhood to find a more desolate and wilderness-like valley, and there is a ninth terror added to-day, for it is scorchingly hot. The two or three villages we pass are poor and mean and dilapidated. Extreme poverty seems written largely over the dirty faces, the towsy heads, and the ragged garments of all the men and boys we meet, and that although there are several herds of goats, sheep and oxen grazing on the hill-sides. I remember making the same mental note when I passed through here in 1904, and I now express to Mr. Wông my opinion that the people here are a poor and half-starved lot who are very much to be pitied. He almost startles me by the vigour of his remonstrances against my mistaken notions. These people, he says, are not poor, but lazy! He likens them to those creatures of Apostolic days, "whose god is their belly" and declares that even the little children, whom we see with scarcely any covering on their dirty bodies—such as they have being mere bundles of rags—have every second or third day a pound or two of mutton to eat, a luxury, he adds, "which we inside the Wall get only once or twice a year"! Warming to his subject, he proceeds to denounce the dwellers in these parts as a set of lawless and thieving rascals who, with their "father-and-mother-official" over sixty miles away, have no fear of the law before their eyes and would knock a man on the head with as little compunction as they would a goat. They are of those who seeing a merchant riding past their villages on mule, donkey or pony, and presuming that he is sure to be carrying silver with him, will form at once a band, make a rapid detour round the hills, meet the lonely traveller in some lonely spot, and relieve him of all further trouble and anxiety by taking away both his animal and his money. "But why then do such people not lay accusation against these villagers?" And the reply is, "Shan kao, Huang Ti

yuan" (The hills are high, and the Emperor distant). To lay a charge at the yamên means not only delay but expense, and the chances are ten against one that the yamên-runners are in league with the villagers, and will make to His Honour—supposing that His Honour ever recalls the case—some report that most effectually stops all further proceedings against them. And so the "plucked chicken" deems it prudent to be content with the one plucking he has already had, and goes his way a wiser and a sadder man; while the people who were thieves this morning and are respectable householders this afternoon are left in undisputed possession of their ill-gotten gains. I give this not as my own opinion, but as the experience of a Chinese who has been twice waylaid upon these same roads. Doubtless the memory of his wrongs quickens his sense of the iniquitous conduct of the people he is discussing, and adds eloquence to his lips, but allowing for all that, and allowing also for the utter contempt which dwellers inside the Great Wall generally have for the inhabitants outside it, there is nothing incredible in the suggestion that where government is lax, and order more a name than a reality, it offers opportunity for rascality which the amateur Jack Sheppards are not slow to avail themselves of. Later on, Wêng draws my attention to a new house that is being built, and this gives him a text on which to dilate on the "Fengshui Hsien-sheng" (The Professer of Geomancy), and the part he plays in Chinese life in the selection of suitable sites and propitious days on which to begin building. He also tells me that should two deaths occur in a house within three years of its being erected, no matter how costly it may have been, it will be instantly declared unlucky and be pulled down and rebuilt in some other place.

The Pahuochihling is 1,300 feet high, and the climb up from either the north or the south side is a matter of no small fatigue. At the base of the hill stands a lonely homestead owned by an old lady who, some years ago, animated either by public spirit or hope of private gain (she runs a little inn in her home), sought to make a direct cart-road over the hill that would be easier to cross than the present pass. She spent Taels 2,000, (about £300 sterling, and nearly all her living) before her means gave out, and her stout heart lost hope. And there to this day remains an unfinished cutting at the summit of the hill on its most accessible point, eloquent of an old woman's enterprise and an official's supineness. For the story goes that when the old woman saw that her own resources were giving out, she appealed to the mandarin for assistance, an appeal that, as may have been expected, fell on deaf ears and moved not the inactive hands.

Reaching the summit of the pass, a scene of unmistakable grandeur bursts upon the view. Had I been writing of my first visit there, I should have added the word "beauty" to my description. For miles around and before you, nothing is to be seen but hills. Rank after rank rises in solemn and stately magnificence, till the eye rests itself on the T'u Shan, on the highest point of which is said to be a temple from which the sea at Shanhaikuan can be distinguished. True, the highest of all these hills is only 8,000 feet above sea-level, and people who have

gazed on the Himalayas, wandered beneath the frozen snows of Mont Blanc, or read Sven Hedin's thrilling descriptions of the Mustagh-Ata, may be pardoned for impatience at my youthful and inexperienced enthusiasm. But when you see around you, in a wide circuit of forty or fifty miles, nothing but a succession of lofty hills, with rugged crests and tapering peaks; when not a house or hut of any kind, and not a trace of human being or wild animal meets your eager gaze, you are impressed with the feeling that you have climbed to the roof of the world, and until the Himalayas or the Alps come in your way, (the grand old Mustagh-Ata is quite out of the question), you are content to let the mind dwell on this picture as on one of the most wonderful scenes that Nature has displayed direct to you. At any rate (I speak for myself) such is my feeling still, and has been for nearly two years, whenever I think of the Pa Huo Chih Ling.

We stopped that afternoon at Yênchangtzu, and next morning came into contact once again with our old friend the Ch'inglungho. In this region, bordering the river, there are three natural curiosities well worthy of the traveller's notice. They are, first, the Yülinshan (Fish-Scales Hill), a lofty mass of rock that exactly resembles the name given to it by the Chinese. Here we heard that sound which so gladdens the heart of the sportsman; I mean the "cluck, cluck" of the pheasant, and saw a few sitting about on the hills, always out of range however; second, Hut'oushih (Tiger-Head Rock) which gives its name to the village which here marks the boundary of the Ch'iênan and Chiênch'ang (Ta'tzukou) hsiens: and third, the Chikungshan, another large hill, which when seen from either north or south, is an excellent representation of a cock's red comb.

We stayed at K'ungch'angman for breakfast, in one of the cleanest and largest inns we had so far seen. I was not at all favourably impressed with the people there, however, and was not surprised when we left the inn to be told by Yuan Min that twelve months before, when he stopped over-night at that inn on his way to Mongolia, the landlord had extorted two-hundred strings of cash (Tls. 40) from some carters who were passing through, on the pretence that they had orders from the official to inspect and report upon all goods in all carts that stopped at the inn. When it is remembered that the nearest mandarin is over sixty miles distant, and that at the further end of the village a Custom house is to be found, one knows what value to attach to the innkeeper's authority.

Between the villages of K'ungch'angman and Painiuts'ün (The Village of One Hundred Cows), there is a road that leads along valley almost due east to Foyêhtung (Buddha's Cave); Shantsuitzu (Mountain dips); and Ta-Ch'êngtzu (The Large City); the latter busy place about fifty miles away. Along this valley flows one branch of the Ch'inglungho, which river, from the Yülinshan to this point, crosses the cart-road no fewer than sixteen times.

At Painiutsün we come upon the first village of the settled Mongols and here too is one of the most beautiful Lama temples that we are likely to see in our travels. I prefer to say nothing of the old Lama in charge, and my silence may perhaps be better understood than my speech. But, if it be true still that

"By their fruits ye shall know them," then at the very first Lama resort we reach on our northward march, Lamaism is convicted of lacking either moral power or spiritual efficacy. What makes the Lama temple at Painiuts'un interesting to me on this trip is that since my first visit eighteen months ago, I have heard that there is in the possession of the priest, an old and now sacred relic of the great Emperor K'ang Hsi, in the form of a stocking that he had left there over two hundred years ago The old Lama is having his meal when we arrive, and at once professes to remember me. He is evidently speaking the truth for once, for he goes on to enquire after my friend who had then accompanied me. After some time spent in small talk and Oriental compliment, I broach the subject of K'ang Hsi's stocking, and ask the old fossil if he will allow me to see it. He appears as if he would have a fit first. He is unmistakably thrown into a state of momentary suspicion, and I suppose that if his thoughts find expression, they would gather round the sacreligious sight of a foreign barbarian handling and perhaps confiscating the most precious possession of Painiuts'ün. I manage to reassure him, however, and after a round of the temple, during which I jog his memory a few times about the stocking, he produces it for our inspection. Passing into an inner room, into which, of course, I make no attempt to follow him, he emerges presently with a small parcel most carefully wrapped up in red cotton. Just as carefully does the old gentleman unfold the covering and hold up before us the stocking that an Emperor—and he one of the best that poor China ever had—once has worn. It is a very large stocking, in appearance somewhat like a mandarin boot. The upper part from the ankle is made of brown flowered and quilted satin, but the foot is the ordinary calico sock of the ordinary man. I observe that it bears signs of singeing, and that it has been clumsily repaired with two pieces of blue calico. My inquiries elicit the fact that on one occasion at the temple fair it has been accidentally set on fire by some incense sticks set before it. Anything is possible in superstitious China, where enlightened officials believe that iron tablets bring rain, and old women believe that two incense sticks carried burning outside the city wall, will expel a devil from the home; so my readers will readily believe me when I tell them that this old sock of K'ang Hsi is guarded most jealously at Painiuts'ün; that the old priest would as soon part with his life as with this; that it is never produced to gratify wanton curiosity, save when a persistent foreigner has to be got rid of: and is exhibited only once a year at the temple fair, when hundreds and thousands of Mongols (and Chinese too, I presume), burn incense in its presence, and kneeling down, knock their heads in reverence before it. The story goes that the Emperor K'ang Hsi, riding a small donkey and unattended, went out from Peking, through the Great Wall at Lêngk'ou, stayed a night at Painiu s'ün temple, and left the stocking there when he started for the North, where we shall come across his tracks again. Whether he left it by accident or design no one now knows. And no one cares either! It is enough that what once covered the sacred foot of the Son of Heaven is actually there in that temple, an object of admiration and adoration

to all the faithful, and a source of profit to the opium-besotted old priest who guards and lives by the temple. I persuade the old man to allow me to photograph him with the stocking in his hand. To make certain of a good picture, I take two "snaps," only to realise when I am too far away to go back, that I have given a slight over-exposure, and the picture consequently lacks in sharpness of outline.

Painiuts'ün temple has not exhausted its wonders when the holy stocking has been seen. In front of the temple stands a very fine old "huai shu" (ash-tree) the blossoms of which are used in making yellow dye, while the seeds are said to be a cure for hemorrhoids. Whether this latter fact has anything to do with the current superstition at Painiuts'ün I do not know, but the truth is that if a young child shows signs of weakness and is likely to be difficult to rear, he is taken to that tree, and either personally or by proxy, acknowledges it, with its magnificent trunk and grand spreading branches, as his *mother*. At the time of our visit, we saw a strip of red paper affixed to the tree, stating that a son of one Chang Tzu nan had taken the tree for his mother, in hope of being restored to health and strength, while numerous offerings in the form of small bannerettes hang from its branches. We were very naturally inclined to laugh at the idea of the thing, but a young and intelligent-looking fellow was standing near, and most solemnly assured us that in numberless cases the remedy had been effectual. There was no question in his mind as to its value.

That night we found most trying and wearisome. All our attempts to find a decent inn failed in village after village, and it is not until 5.45, having trudged seventy li on a roughroad, that we reached the broken-down hamlet of Wutaoling. (Fifth Road Pass). Here my men were crowded into a stifling public room at the only inn in the place; the only private room was occupied by a party of professional gamblers, who did not see that they were called on to give place to any foreigner; and I was thankful to get a room that baffles description, and was quite beyond the criticism of a tired man, in the private house of our genial landlord.

Next morning we found ourselves travelling over a much easier road. At Ch'ap'êng (The Tea Booths), two roads divert, one to Pakou 120 li west; one to Chinchoufu, 480 li east. Ch'ap'êng itself is a very small place, but being near cross roads, boasts three decent inns. The largest and best, however, is closed, and we learned that the reason for that is that two years ago the brigands raided the place, and took the landlord of this inn a prisoner. They held him to ransom for over a month, but the poor fellow returned home only to die; since then no one has had courage or capital enough to reopen the business.

From here to Peilu (The Northern Furnace) the hills are lower; the valley wider; the roads quite level and easys going. All we needed now to do was to keep steadily on, assured that nature would for the time being place no more obstacles in our way, and remembering, as Yuan Min, trudging along with the heavy plane-table on his shoulders, tells us, "Shih shan, pu tang." (There are hills, but they will not hinder us.)

One night at Peilu, where by the courtesy of a minor educational official, I had a comfortable private room give

up to me; our midday meal next day (April 27) in a Mongol inn, where the landlord learning that we were making for Mongolia, offered to provide us with an interpreter, an offer that was as courteously declined as made, the Mongolian of the settler being no use among the nomads; thence we came to T'atzukou (Pagoda Valley), or to call it by its official name, Chiênch'anghsien. Here by two p.m. the first long stage of our journey was at an end.

Going along the road within sight of the city, I noticed a man ahead of me carrying in his right hand what looked to be a very peculiar kind of whip. On overtaking him, I found that this whip had a strong wooden handle seventeen inches long, while suspended from it was a chain of six inches, to which was attached a piece of rounded brass three inches in length, the whole forming one of the most formidable weapons it has ever been my lot to see of such simple manufacture. The man told me he used it to beat off the dogs when he entered a village, but when I suggested jokingly that it was more likely used to intimidate travellers, and that he was by way of being a strolling vagabond, he became terribly frightened, and protested by all he held sacred that he was only a humble collector of accounts, sent out by a firm in the city to get in their debts. My writer later on made him an offer of thirty cents for his "whip," but it was only with very great reluctance, and on promise that I would not accuse him before the official, that he pocketed my money and I took his weapon. He displayed no more anxiety to chat with me after this, but I have now in my possession the quaintest "dog-whip" I have ever seen. One well-directed blow would leave "Towser" a five-cents-per-pound-commodity. And at any rate, it has not been used to rob or murder anyone, since I became its owner.

T'ATZUKOU AND JESHUIT'ANG.

Nearing T'atzukou in the afternoon of April 27, I send one of my men on ahead to see if we can have accommodation in the Mission Chapel where we had stayed eighteen months before. To our great surprise, we find that we are expected, intimation having come from a missionary friend as to our intended visit. There is no foreigner in residence in this city, but we find everything in readiness for our arrival, and after six or seven days on the road, the observed of all observers, and the criticised of all the curious, it need not be said how much we all welcome the comparative quiet and privacy of a Chinese chapel.

T'atzukou is the local name of a large city which has the official designation of Chiênch'anghsien, and which is—while an integral part of the Chihli province, and in the last resort, subject to His Excellency Yuan Shih-k'ai—under the direct administration of the Tartar General at Ch'êngtêfu. It is one of the peculiarities of most of these cities outside the Great Wall, that they all own at least two names, an official and a local.

Thus:—

Ch'êngtêfu (Prefecture of Complete Virtue) is also Jêho, commonly written Jehol (Hot River);

P'ingch'üanchou (City of Peaceful Springs) is Pakou (the eighth valley, that is, counting from Peking);

Chiênch'anghsien (The Gloriously-Founded City) as above, is also T'atzukou (Pagoda Valley), this latter name arising from an old and now broken-down pagoda of the T'ang Dynasty which may still be seen west of the city, the telegraph wire, sign of the new era, running right in front of it;

Ch'ihfênghsien (The City of the Red Hill) is locally known as Hata, or more correctly, Wulanhata, which is the full Mongolian translation of the Chinese official name;

Ch'aoyangfu (The Prefecture that looks to the sun), is locally known as Santsot'a (three Pagodas), from the fact that in the city were originally three magnificent pagodas. There are now only two remaining, one having fallen—I could not learn how long ago—and on its site is now built a fine temple in honour of the god of war.

Other cities in the territory beyond the Wall are Luanp'ing and Fêngninghsiens, which with Liangpufu (this latter near the Weich'ang, or Imperial Hunting Park) are all directly under the Prefect at Jêhol. While, on the Eastern side, in 1904, two new "hsiens" were created subject to Ch'aoyang, which city was then elevated from a "hsien" into a "fu," and so took over the supervision of Chienp'ing and Fuhsing "hsiens." These two new districts are very wide and extensive, the former, formed out of Chiênch'ang and P'ingch'üan (whence its name), being located at a busy town named Hsinch'iu, 240 li north-east of T'atzukou; while Fuhsinghsien took over the most northerly part of the Ch'aoyang territory, and is set up at a town named Wuerht'upan, some 180 li north of Ch'aoyang.

In popular speech, these various ci ies are always spoken of by their local names, though whenever you are drawing near to any of them, and are anywhere within one hundred li of the city you seek, the people indulge in a still further abbreviation, and concisely speak of the "Chieshang," that is, the street.

Another peculiarity of all these cities is that not one of them has a wall round it. This is all the more remarkable when we remember the proverbial lawlessness of the district. There is an apology for a wall at Ch'aoyang, but it is no better than many walls I have seen round small villages on the Shantung plain, or even in Outer Chihli itself, and would be of absolutely no value as a means of defence in the event of an assault by a determined enemy. The only answer I have ever received to my many inquiries for an explanation of this fact is, that the cities are for the most part, business centres, that the business men are all "k'ou-li-ti," that is, from districts inside the Wall, Chihli, Shantung and Shansi men mostly; that their only idea in going there is to amass wealth as quickly as may be possible, which they send on or take back to their own homes, and retire from the anxieties and uncertainties of business at the earliest possible moment. And they very naturally argue—I will not say reasonably—"Why should we spend our money in building a wall round a city, where at best we are but strangers and pilgrims? Let those who want it build the wall. It is none of our business."

I think, perhaps, that there is another explanation than this, and I give it here for what it is worth. This district has only been "exploited" and developed within the regime of the present dynasty, a matter of about 260 years. Formerly all this territory was owned and peopled by the Mongols, pretty much as the "ts'ao-ti" of the Northern regions is up to the present day. By an euphonious subterfuge on the part of the Manchu dynasty, expressed as "Chiehti, yang min," (borrow the land to support the—Chinese—people), the government got rid of some of its surplus population, which contained many rowdy elements, from Chihli and Shantung, and planted them on the land for agricultural development. Even to-day the recently-created district of Liangpufu is being slowly colonised in this way. Some ten years ago, in a time of flood and famine in the north-eastern part of Chihli, free grants of land were made to any who would go there and settle with their families. It is an excellent plan and worthy of a paternal government, but many of the more intelligent Mongols have their own thoughts about it, and resent (though they are too cowed to give voice to their resentment) the gradual ousting to which they are being subjected. My theory as to the lack of walls round the cities then is this. Most of the walls found in China surrounding great centres of business and population have a history of at least four or five hundred years. The common saying has it: "T'ang hsiu t'a; Ming hsiu ch'eng." (The T'ang dynasty erected pagodas; but the Ming dynasty built cities.) Consequently most of the walls we see now were built in the time of the Ming dynasty, which lasted from A. D. 1368 to 1644. The Manchu, "Ta Ch'ing" (Great Pure) dynasty, under which we now live, has never seriously

concerned itself with either pagodas or city-walls. It is reasonable then to assume that in the comparatively newly developed territory beyond the Great Wall, the officials have never set about the business in any earnest fashion. Had they done so, our knowledge of Chinese officials, and of the pressure they can bring to bear upon their subjects, would lead to the conclusion that, whether they were willing or not, the traders would have had to provide the means, while to the official would have belonged the "kudos" and the perquisites.

The town of T'atzukou (for we prefer to call it by its commonest name) is one well worth a visit. It has clean and well-kept streets fully thirty feet wide, in some places even more. The main streets run from north to south and from east to west, and are lined on either side with large, commodious and excellently-built shops. Here are displayed for sale or barter all sorts of native and foreign goods, and there are scarcely any of the common necessaries that may not be purchased in the street. Most of the larger stores display large sign-cloths, not boards, stating in giant characters that they have Shantung goods on sale, which would seem to indicate either that Shantung goods are specially desirable; or that the Chinese population, hailing originally from the Shantung province, are clannish enough to prefer goods with a Shantung "wei-erh" (fragrance).

One sure sign of prosperity in any Northern Chinese town is the presence of a "tang-p'u" (pawnshop) and a "shao-kuo" (distillery). Years ago James Gilmour drew attention to this fact in the columns of the "Chinese Recorder." He had special and particular knowledge of T'atzukou and other towns in this territory, and his conclusions must undoubtedly have been based on what he saw there. Well, T'atzukou, judged by this standard, must be one of the most prosperous towns in creation. It boasts six large pawnshops. How many distilleries I unfortunately forgot to inquire. But it may be taken for granted that with six pawnshops there will at least be as many distilleries, if not double the number. For without any moralising at this juncture, my readers may be reminded that in China as in all the fair countries of the West, the distillery involves the pawnshop. They are twin brothers and always prospering.

There are said to be seven hundred business houses in T'atzukou, and a total population of over 100,000. There are, of course, no foreign hongs there, but there are Chinese representatives of Tientsin business houses in the city. I read a notice several times posted in the street to the effect that Jui Chi were always ready to purchase skins of all sorts. While, if my memory serves me right, I saw an office-board belonging to the much-respected British firm of Hsin T'ai Hsing. The city itself lies in a fertile valley, watered by one of the head-waters of the Talingho, which stream we forded seven weeks later within four miles of Chinchoufu. The official boundaries stretch out principally South and East of the city. In the latter district are the mines of P'ingkou, some forty miles away, where it was reported work was to be commenced in foreign style and under foreign supervision. In the north and west parts of the district, Pakou, much larger than T'atzukou, comes

within a comparatively short distance.

Both in 1904 and on the occasion of my present visit, the district was under a mandarin named Hung. Mr. Hung I have never had an opportunity of meeting, but that gives me all the greater pleasure in testifying to the excellent reputation he enjoys throughout his district. On three separate occasions I have travelled in different parts of his "hsien"; have made inquiries at all sorts of places and of all sorts of people, and have always, without a single exception, received similar answers. "Pu Li" (not amiss); "Ch'ing Kuan" (Bright, or clean-handed official); "Pu hsiang ch'iên" (He doesn't care for money); such are some of the aphoristic comments made upon a man who, more than any other in all his wide district, lives in the public eye. "The fierce, white light that beats upon a throne" can discover no serious flaw in his conduct. And in these days, in China, it is as much a pleasure to discover, as it is a duty to make known, a man in such a position, with whom his subjects are well content, and for whom they have nothing but praise. May his shadow never grow less, and may many such like him be raised up in poor China!

Among the few special features of the city are, first, the beautiful temple inside the East Gate—there are gates, if no walls—erected in honour of the god of war. This temple, which has two large courtyards and many large halls, is one of the best-kept I have seen, and must have cost a great amount of money when erected. The front is decorated with solid pillars of dressed stone, and this is typical of all the work and material that has been put into the building. It was particularly pleasing to a missionary to and on going inside that one of the best halls has been devoted to the purposes of a school for the younger boys of the city. Twenty or more young hopefuls were there under a master singing their lessons in approved (though antique) style, with lusty voices and inharmonious tones.

Secondly, the Shantung and Shansi Guild Halls—evidence of the number of business men from these two provinces resident in the city—are well worth a visit. Into the former we did not attempt to enter, as a large school had been organised there, and we did not wish to cause any interruption of tasks. But we visited the latter, and found a very large courtyard, with an immense and elaborately-decorated hall for gatherings of Shansi men; a beautiful "pai lou" (memorial arch) in front of it; and rooms on either side in which were quartered a company of cavalry soldiers with their horses, part of the Yi Chün under the supreme command of General Ma Yu-k'ün. (Ma of the Pearly mountain).

Thirdly, Mahomedanism is very strong in most of these extra-mural cities, and T'atzukou has a beautiful mosque, the decorations of which externally are most lavish, a great contrast to the quietness and emptiness of the interior. I managed to get an excellent photograph of this mosque.

Fourthly, the Ts'ai Shen Miao (Temple to god of wealth) is large and good enough to give due glory to a personage so much besought, but the K'uei Hsing Lou (Polar Star Loft), usually erected on the wall as the literary guardian of a city, has here to be content with a location on the small wall surrounding the "hsien" yamên.

Perhaps the most interesting de-

velopment of recent days at T'atzukou is the organisation of the modern schools in conformity with the Imperial decree. Here Hung Ta-laoyeh has set a most worthy example to his brother officials in adjoining districts. We are privileged to pay a visit to these schools, and on the invitation of the Proctor, a young and wide-awake Chü-jên (M.A.) named Li, we have an opportunity of inspecting all the premises. A large compound, or rather succession of compounds, has been secured on the south-east street; rooms have been altered and improved according to requirements; so that there are now eight sets of class-rooms, dormitories, and dining-rooms, all in most excellent condition and kept very clean and tidy. There are no fewer than 160 students in attendance, ranging in age from fourteen to forty years and over. Thus, contrasted with the fifty or sixty men in the middle school at Yungp'ingfu, T'atzukou makes a very good showing indeed. For while the students at Yungp'ingfu have been collected from the seven districts composing the prefecture, the 160 we find at T'atzukou are gathered from the one "hsien" only. From here, on satisfactorily passing the necessary examinations, they are drafted to Ch'êngtêfu, thence to Tientsin or Paotingfu, for the prosecution of the higher studies. The curriculum is understood to comprise English, arithmetic, geography and other elementary subjects. While during my visit there I am pleased to note the cleanly appearance of both men and buildings and can admire the military discipline of the place (although I am a lover of peace, and none too much enamoured of China's feverish haste in a warlike direction), yet, later on, it grieves me to learn that T'atzukou school is at present *without teachers* for any of the subjects just named. So here we have what would be practically impossible in any land save in this empire of anomalies and incongruities, namely:—a suite of splendid buildings, a set of smart and teachable lads, an organisation for funds that comes as near perfection as any I have known in China, an official who is sincerely anxious to do his Emperor's biddings and sufficiently imbued with the spirit of the age to bring the new learning within reach of his people, yet hindered and hampered at the fountain-head by reason of a paucity of teachers. Is China not in danger of "more haste, less speed?" And if the new learning is to be at all effective, is it not imperative that by some means or other, the higher authorities should see to it that a sufficient supply of teachers, more or less competent for their duties, is provided to meet the demands which the government has itself initiated? It is a simple matter for Viceroys and Governors to make suggestions to the Throne. Simpler still for one stroke of the vermilion pencil to abolish the old form of literary advancement; to order modern schools to be set up throughout the Empire. But the lower officials, especially those in places remote from the capital, have found that upon them has been laid a burden difficult to carry and with the very best intentions in the world—T'atzukou being a case in point—many of them are finding it next to impossible to obey the Imperial behests. "The old order changeth, giving place to new," only very slowly in those places that are on the outskirts

of civilisation, and a prime need is for men; men of the right stamp, with character enough to direct and knowledge enough to teach. At the school here is one fine room which they dub the "Li T'ang" (Hall of Rites), where once a month *every* student is required to worship at the tablet of Confucius. This effectually bars out all Christian lads and, apart altogether from the higher questions of religious liberty, it is undoubtedly a blot on the new order of things that a percentage of the most tractable boys in the country should be prevented from sharing in the privileges of the new learning.

At T'atzukou there is stationed one battalion of infantry, with a few companies of cavalry belonging to the foreign-trained army of General Ma Yu-k'ün The General himself has his headquarters at Pakou, sixty miles away, where he has been comfortably settled for the past two years or more. The men within easy reach of the General, who is a veritable terror to evil-doers, are, for the most part, kept well in hand. Later on we came upon some detachments further removed from his sharp eye and heavy hand, of whose behaviour the less we say the more they will shine. It seems to be an all-too-common experience in China that soldiers who are set down in lonely places, ostensibly to protect the people, earn for themselves by their misbehaviour and unlawful assumption of authority, a name that in the apt but inelegant Chinese phrase, is, "kung ch'ou" (superlatively stinking).

To the missionary traveller, as indeed to all lovers of the adventurous and the daring, T'atzukou will always preserve a permanent interest. Here it was that James Gilmour, the most enterprising of evangelists, the most untiring of travellers and the most sympathetic friend whom the Mongols have ever had, made his home for some months every year, after he had, to all human appearance, failed in his long-continued work among the Mongols. Memories of the man confront you here in the form of two or three simple but stalwart Christian men, who tell you with pride and affection thrilling their tones that they were taught the truth and baptised years ago by "Ching Mu-shih (Pastor Gilmour). Time after time have I been asked if I ever knew the man who dispensed medicines and preached the "tao-li" (doctrine) under the tent; and the Mongols will tell you of a man who spoke their language like one of themselves and was always their most patient and kindly friend. On my last visit to T'atzukou we had gone to the inn where Gilmour had made his lonely home. The rooms he had occupied had been long pulled down, but the gate through which he must have passed scores and hundreds of times still stood. And on its lintels were yet three Chinese characters. That on the right had the single character 聖 "sheng," which means "holy"; that on the left the two characters 福音 "fu-yin," which signifies "Gospel". So that, reading from right to left, as the Chinese do, they made the phrase "Holy Gospel". Years had passed since Gilmour's death. Nothing remained there to remind us that a man of God had once lived his lonely life in that place, save these three simple characters. And they were to us a parable. While missionaries come and go, like other men but the

creatures of a day, the "Holy Gospel" it is their very life to preach abides unchanged and unchanging. "God buries His workmen, but He carries on His work," and the Book which means so much to His workmen can never perish from the earth. This time the first place I visited, armed with my "kodak," was that same old inn. I wanted a picture of that old gate and those three characters. Alas, I was too late, for only a few weeks before more alterations had been begun, and amongst them had been the removal of the last link that identified James Gilmour with that house. But his work abides in the changed lives of a few simple countrymen, who have continued faithful to his teaching, through all the trying years that have elapsed since his death. Thus "he being dead, yet speaketh."

At T'atzukou it is possible by telegram to get in touch with the outer world, and so we are able to convey news of our well-being to a quarter where such news will be very welcome. We find, however, that no telegrams can be accepted here or dispatched until five p.m. every day. The reason given is that since the war in Manchuria all messages between Peking and Mukden are sent along this line, which must be kept clear for any important dispatches from the Tartar General to his Imperial Master. Messages from intermediate stations can, therefore, only be sent after five o'clock in the afternoon.

The Chinese Imperial Post Office has just completed arrangements for extending its operations outside the Great Wall, and now a line of offices stretches across from Jehol to Chinchoufu, taking in the most important cities *en route*, and controlled from Tientsin (viâ Tongshan) and Newchwang respectively. Two more places need to be added to those already opened, viz: Hata and K'ulukou. With these towns, both connected with the excellent postal service, the northern regions may be left for a decade or more.

We stay two days in T'atzukou, glad of the opportunity of a rest and a bath. We spend the time quietly in seeing the few sights of the town, taking and developing more pictures, lending a hand (or rather a tongue) in the ordinary services of the little sanctuary in which we are housed, and where every evening a large crowd of men and boys assembles to listen to the preaching that is regularly carried on.

Here also I learn that I must consider myself fortunate, if I get through the district without being interrupted in my investigations and map-making. The Chinese officials are said to have received strict orders from Peking to prevent any surveying or sketching by foreigners in this territory and so intent are they on obedience that only a few weeks before my visit four Japanese engaged in similar work have been politely escorted back to the Manchurian border. I comfort myself in the fact that I have guarded against any such interference with my purposes by the manner in which I have had my new passport made out and that the Chinese authorities in Tientsin have been officially informed of my intention. Still, believing it wise to "go delicately," we do not court unnecessary publicity; though, on the other hand, we make no attempt to disguise the character of the work we are doing or to hide the purpose of our visit.

On Monday, April 30, at six a.m., we leave T'atzukou for the North. Rumours of brigands in activity in the

very districts we are now to traverse have been brought to us again and again during our two days' rest and one of my men at least is somewhat upset at the prospect before us. Passing out of the city at the North gate, we come upon a fairly large temple by the wayside, which bears the title "Kuei Wang Miao" (Devil-King Temple). This is quite the only occasion on which I have seen a temple erected in honour of his Satanic Majesty. Evidently he is strong in these parts, and needs to be propitiated.

We are now approaching what we have been led to expect is a most interesting village, viz: Jêshuit'ang (Hot Water Baths), which proves to be only ten miles from T'atzukou. Several times as we have come North have we heard of its charms and its virtues, so there is not a little eager expectation among us. The road thither is very easy, one of the easiest we have had. We travel almost due North, with no more than one point and a half deviation the whole day in a march of twenty miles. Going along in the early morning we overtake a kindly-faced and simple Lama on pilgrimage, with his few belongings strapped in a frame on his back and his staff in his hand. I "snap" him, but the light is bad, and the picture not a success. I am afraid I have scared him, however, for immediately after the "snapping" is over, he turns aside from the road, mumbling that he cannot keep pace with us, and prefers to travel alone.

Jêshuit'ang we find to be an exceedingly wretched and dilapidated Mongol village, though set in a fine amphitheatre of hills ranging from 2,000 to 4,000 feet high. But the mineral springs which give the village its name are fully in evidence and the bleached stones over which the warm water trickles away, give token of its chemical properties. There are ten or twelve of these natural springs, over which small mud-huts have been erected, in which you find baths about five feet long and three or four feet deep. Two of these huts are evidently reserved for the better class of bathers, for at the doors are hung dirty curtains, so screening off the bathers from the public gaze. Also, outside one of these, squats a grinning old Lama, with a gourd in his hand. That gourd is his collection-box and the quality who enter either of these two huts are not expected to pass with their nose in the air, nor with their eyes on the heavens. The remaining huts have neither doors nor curtains, and here the genus man disports himself in nature's garb.

The springs are very much patronised and in the humble homes of the villagers, as well as in the two inns of the place, lodgings "cheap and nasty" may be had by any of the visitors to the "Spa." We do not ourselves indulge: time being with us a matter of importance, but we see many others who do. The Mongol women are said to use the springs to a great extent. Later on, when we get among their unwashed sisters in the "grass-land," how fervently do I wish there were a Jêshuit'ang in every Mongol settlement. It would change the face of nature and the venue of some of nature's smallest insects. We see some Mongol maidens leaving the curtained huts. They have their heads carefully wrapped up, lest they catch cold and one saucy lassie looks quite picturesque with a dog-skin (on which I presume she sleeps at night) doing

duty for a head-covering during the day.

The springs have a wide reputation for their medicinal virtues in all cases of rheumatism, sciatica and kindred complaints; people come from all parts of the district, spending a week, ten days, in some cases a month or more, as the needs of their case may require. We meet an old Lama Abbot, with his little disciple, in the inn where we had our food. The old man has come over eighty miles to take a course of the waters and the bright-faced boy of seventeen he has with him is also indulging in the luxury of a daily bath. A constant supply of fresh, clean water is always guaranteed. "Men may come and men may go, but I go on for ever," is the unceasing warble of these waters as they bubble up to the surface, and trickle away down the rocks, being used there by the "Marthas" of the village to wash the village clothes. Were it only more accessible to the world, one can well imagine some enterprising speculator booming Jêshuit'ang. Perhaps when the railway that is now in the air runs through T'atzukou, the virtues of these springs may be realised and we shall have an extra-mural Harrogate, or a Mongol Marienbad.

Our journeyings on this day end at Mangniuyingtzu (Bull Camp), where we stay in a Mahommedan inn, which is in a sad state of repair. The landlord, however, claims us as relations, declaring that his forbears came from the West, and that, therefore, we must be "cousins." Before we reach there, climbing a high pass (2,000 feet) by the side of a hill known as "Wangpashan" (Tortoise, or Shameless Hill), so called because it has a sudden drop from a tableland into a deep valley, Yuan Min points out to me to the North West of us a pagoda that even there, fifteen miles away, shows up boldly on the sky-line. That he says is the Tamingt'a (The Famous Pagoda) and then begins to spin me an old-world tale of the long-ago.

THE TAMINGT'A OR THE FAMOUS PAGODA

We have not been settled more than half-an-hour in the broken down inn at Mangniuyingtzu, before it begins to blow a gale, and we have an opportunity of seeing, from the safe vantage-ground of our over-ventilated rooms, what a dust-storm in earnest is like. All we can see distinctly is the public room of the inn across the yard. All beyond that is a dense cloud of yellow dust, and our genial "boniface" comes to suggest, that if it blows like this to-morrow, we had better decide to remain where we are.

Next morning, however, it is again clear and beautiful. Is it not Mayday? And are not we, like hundreds of people round about us, going to give ourselves a day at the fair? For we have learned that our arrival here is most opportune. This is the great occasion of all the year at the famous pagoda, which we saw from the distance yesterday; and with five days of theatrical performances, and multitudinous stalls full of all sorts of merchandise, good, bad and indifferent, foreign and native, we are to have an opportunity of seeing the most renowned fair in all these northern districts.

We are all up betimes, therefore, and though we have only ten miles to do, are on the way by six o'clock. We are now in the mist of a landscape, than which a greater contrast could scarcely be imagined with that we passed through south of T'atzukou. In place of those rugged mountain peaks piercing at times through the clouds; those difficult passes that catch your breath; those narrow valleys that limit your vision; to say nothing of the stones and boulders that obstruct your path in rippling streams or dried-up-beds; we are now in a rich agricultural plain, with broad sweeps from five to ten li wide; and such magnificent stretches of cultivated land that it is a positive delight to see it. The hills have now receded into the distance; they are long and low-rolling slopes rather than hills now, that in the summer-time, especially after the rains, must be simply radiant with green; while such passes as we have had to cross yesterday and to-day, (1,900 and 2,000 feet) are so gradual in their rise that we must look at the aneroid to be conscious of any rise at all.

We pass only six villages in our ten miles march this morning, and all but one of these are Mongolian. So that we are now right into the Mongolian centre, in what from of old has been known as the "Shat'okuo," (Kingdom of Sand-Hills), which extends right up beyond which we are yet to travel, and is still spoken of under that name.

There are no trees anywhere to be seen save round the few villages we pass. Thus there is absolutely nothing to interfere with the cultivation of the land, and it is no surprise to us to learn that the people in these parts are reputed to be very

wealthy. But—here is the fly in the ointment—we discover that the most renumerative crop is opium, and we see men in several plots carefully watering the plants, lest the long-continued drought means failure. Query: —If China really means business in her endeavours to stop the Indian opium trade, is it not time she gave proof of her bona-fides by putting some restrictions on native production? Or is it —as some of the cynics say, and a few missionaries fear—that in stopping the importation of opium from India, China is hoping to secure all that trade for herself? (Vide "Times," Weekly Edition, June 7 1906). Even, however, if she is indulging such a hope, it is "a consummation devoutly to be wished" that the blot upon the British escutcheon be speedily removed by a Government with a conscience. But the uncertain attitude of China does not encourage us to trust much in the sincerity of, nor the reasons for, her protests against the drug.

There is no need for us to ask the way this morning. Even if we could not see that beautiful pagoda, gleaming white in the morning sunshine, we have but to join the gaily-dressed throng of men and maidens, Mantzus (the common name for the Chinese here) and Mongols; lads and lasses; lamas and laymen; who, on foot, on donkeys, ponies or mules, or in carts, are all wending their way in one direction; and we shall safely reach our destination. One realises the Oriental picture of "Whither the tribes go up" this morning, and all are in holiday mood as well as in holiday attire, we have sundry chats with various members of our travelling company as we push steadily along.

But here it is necessary I should make a little map-correction. On the tentative maps that have been lent to me for this trip, there is marked a fairly broad stream named the Tsolaoho (Left Old River). We make enquiries in all quarters. Not a man has any knowledge of any such name or any such river. There is, near T'atzukou, a small stream correctly noted on our maps as one of the head-waters of the Talingho, already named in this narrative. But all plead ignorance of the Tsolaoho. At Mangniuying'zu, however, we suddenly meet a narrow brook which rises two miles away near a village named Kouch'iu. This stream is known as the Laohocha (The Old River Fork) and enters the main stream of the Laoho, four miles away north, at a place called Paokulu.

The direct road to Hata lies through this latter village, but as we are bound for the pagoda, we hold on past a Mongol settlement named Sanchia (Three Homes) and passing through Hungmiaotzu (The Red Temple) and just before reaching Mêngchiawop'u, (Mêng Family Shed), we come on the Laoho itself, and have our first view of the river we are not to lose sight of for nearly a month. It is the first day of May. We say our final farewell to the river on May 22.

Here we have to ford the river. The water is very shallow, only a few inches deep at present, and not more than fifty feet broad (the bed is of course much wider), but there are neither bridges nor stepping-stones, and our numerous friends on foot, who reach the river with us, must needs take off their shoes and stockings, and wade across.

Realising that there will be no room for us in any of the inns at the fair, I

have already sent on my cook to seek us out sleeping quarters in the most convenient place he can find. The rest of us continue moving slowly along towards the pagoda. We see ahead of us now the remains of a very extensive mud-wall, and in order that my story may read clearly, this is perhaps the point to turn aside from our own experiences of this day, and relate all I have learned respecting the Tamingch'eng (Famous City) and the Taming-t'a (Famous Pagoda).

The foundation of the Tamingch'eng is, not surprisingly, shrouded in some degree of mystery. The most reliable accounts place its establishment in the time of the Wutaich'ao (Five Posterior Dynasties). The Wutai followed immediately on the T'angch'ao, which existed from A.D. 618 to 907. The Wutai therefore lasted from 907 to 960. It was during the first of these, that known as the Houliangchi 後梁紀, (Posterior Liang Dynasty) that one Li K'ê-yung 李克用, a native of Pienliang, said to be a district in the region of the present Nanking, a high official to the Emperor of that day, and a man much addicted to drinking, in a fit of drunken fury killed some other official. He was instantly seized and thrown into prison, and the probability is that in a little time, Li K'ê-tung would have suffered the extreme penalty for his crime. He had, however, a friend in high authority, who came to his rescue. This was one Ch'ên Ching-ssu, 陳景思 with whom Li K'êyung had contracted the life-long bond of friendship known to this day as "mêng hsiung ti" (sworn brotherhood). This is brought by a mutual "k'ê-t'ou"; the (to us foreigners) simple act of kneeling together on the floor, and knocking their heads to each other, making two men unchanging friends, a friendship that will endure almost all tests, and may be continued through many generations. Ch'ên Ching-ssu devised some means whereby Li K'ê-yung escaped from prison, and the possibility of execution, and he, fearing Imperial wrath, lost no time in putting some distance between himself and the Emperor he had offended. He fled to the Shat'okuo, in the district I am now writing about. Here he found a Mongol king, or rather, many Mongol kings, there being at that time no fewer than forty-eight petty Mongol kingdoms classed under the above generic name. Li K'ê-yung no sooner felt himself beyond the possibility of recapture than he set about to make himself powerful in the land of his exile. He openly declared himself a rebel to the Emperor he had so lately served and wronged. He associated with himself a large number of malcontents, who, like himself, had "left their country for their country's good," and the passage of the years saw the gradual rise of this man to what was practically a kingly authority, multitudes owning his sway, and still greater multitudes fearing his wrath. He took now the name by which he is commonly known, Li Chin-wang 李晉王. He built the city of which we see the remains, girdling it with a mud-rampart that was ten li long on each of its four sides, and which in its ruin may be walked upon to this day. He imitated the Oriental magnificence of his old master, and formed within the walls of what he henceforth called the Tamingch'êng, no fewer than twelve separate cities, somewhat after the style of the city of Peking to-day. His

BATH-HOUSES AT JÊHUIT'ANG.

MONGOL WOMEN AT THE LAMINGT'A.

THE LAMINGT'A (TAKEN AT DISTANCE OF ONE LI).

"SHU SAN T'AI PAO" NEAR LAMINGT'A.

name and fame spread far and wide. He sent his troops to threaten and harass the Emperor from whose wrath he had but lately fled, until at length, fearing that the rebellion would lead to the loss of his throne and kingdom, the Emperor who had once threatened him with death sent an embassy of peace to him in the person of his own sworn brother and leal friend, Ch'en Ching-ssu. Even yet, the pretensions of Li Ching-wang could not be brought within bounds. His early vows, of course, prevented his doing any harm to Ch'ên Ching-ssu, but he disregarded all his arguments, and ignored all his pleadings, resolutely declaring his intention to fight the Emperor to the death, and take both his throne and his kingdom. These warlike resolves so distressed the heart of the faithful Ch'ên Ching-ssu, the man pulled by love and duty in opposite directions, that his hair and beard turned white in a single night. Then a favourite daughter of the upstart king, pitying the sorry condition to which her father's friend had been reduced, pleaded with her father to make peace and cease from his encroachments on the China of that day. Where friendship had failed, the power of paternal love was conqueror, and Ch'ên Ching-ssu, a white-haired but now light-hearted man, was able to return and report to his Imperial master the complete success of his mission.

Tradition gives us no copy of the treaty now made between the Chinese Emperor and Li Chin-wang, but whatever it was, it left the latter in undisputed lordship over the region he had appropriated to himself, and he was still the terror of the Mongols who inhabited the smiling country. As we approach the city and pagoda, we notice at regular intervals on the roadside collections of heaps of stones that resemble the old cairns said to be found in the ancient Gaelic country. There are always thirteen heaps laid up in a line; the centre one of abnormal size, the other twelve (six on either side), being very much smaller than that in the centre, but themselves all of uniform size. Our first enquiry respecting these yields us no satisfactory answer; but we are more successful the second time of asking. These we find are also associated with the mighty tyrant of one thousand years ago, Li Chin-wang. The tale goes that he had in all, thirteen sons, known then and still as the 十三太保 "Shih San T'ai Pao" (The Thirteen Princes). The eldest of these was an adopted son, by name Li Chün-hsiao, a young scamp who was almost as widely feared and hated as his father. To propitiate the dreaded tyrants (I imagine that the suggestion must first have come from themselves), the poor, oppressed Mongols of the Shat'okuo, devised a scheme worthy of a better cause. Throughout the wide domains now governed by Li Chin-wang, at regular distances of from three to four li, and always pointing in the direction of the Tamingch'êng, they erected these stone-heaps, or cairns; designated them the Shih San T'ai Pao, in honour of the thirteen princes (Li Chun-hsiao, being the oldest boy, was made the central, largest heap) and regularly paid worship to these stones in token of their fealty to the throne. And to this day, wherever you go in what is known as the Shat'okuo, you will see these memorial heaps. Where there are no stones, the "cairns" are made

of timbers; and where there are no timbers, they are made of common earth. But, whether stones, timbers or earth, there they are, a conspicuous feature of the landscape, usually on the highest hills, and there, moreover, on the fifteenth day of the seventh moon, the Mongols still honour these cairns, a did their forefathers one thousand years ago. In the early morning of the appointed day, groups of mounted Mongols gather round the "cairns;" at a given signal from the Master of the Ceremonies, every man, woman and child on horseback circles at a mad gallop several times round the "thirteen princes"; others burn the incense sticks and paper before them; and then all unite in the inevitable feast of mutton with which every festival must needs be crowned. At least, such is the tale as told to me by a dozen Mongols in as many different places during my trip in that region. They call the ceremony "Ao Pao;" what those two words mean I could not exactly learn. Ask them why they keep up the practice, now that Li Chin-wang is no longer here to oppress them, and you will get the answer you get everywhere in China for most idolatrous, and all incomprehensible, ceremonies: "Our fathers did it, and so must we."

It is to be presumed, though of this I could get no definite information, that Li Chin-wang was also the builder of the most magnificent pagoda that is to be seen in North-China. Since it stands within the walls of the inner city, and since Li Chin-wang lived immediately after the time of the T'ang dynasty, we are fairly safe in ascribing the pagoda to him. And it does him credit too. It is a splendid piece of work. And in splendid condition, though it has upreared its proud head so long, and "braved a thousand years the battle and the breeze." It is 640 feet high; has thirteen storeys (have they anything to do with the Shih San T'ai Pao, I wonder?) of what appear to be separate floors; is of course octagonal in shape, and round the base measures 360 Chinese feet. There is no entrance into the interior, but just above the stone basement (and that is some twenty feet from the ground, the pagoda itself being built on a small hillock), there are beautiful gilded images of the Buddha, and the appearance of the whole, especially when the morning sun touches the gold with glory, and shines on the impassive features of the prince who made the Great Renunciation, is something worth travelling a long way to see. The photographs I secured but inadequately reproduce what is unquestionably one of the sights of North-China; a sight which presumably has been seen but by few foreigners.

There are two other unfinished pagodas, a few li away, called by the natives "Pan Chiê T'a" (The Half-built pagodas). It was evidently a case with Li Chin-wang, of "this man began to build and was not able to finish." Away to the west also is said to be the tyrant's burying-ground. We did not see it, for reasons which will appear later on.

Naturally, the traditions connected with a personage such as Li Chin-wang must have been, take on a good many forms in a land of super-abundant credulity such as this. There is no need to retail them all, but I am informed that if I would learn more of Li Chin-wang, his doings and his drinkings; his prowess and his tyranny; I should spend a

few nights before the "ch'ang ying" (shadow shows) that from time to time enliven the long evenings of the country Chinese.

Mention is made of this same Li K'e-yung by Professor Giles in his Biographical Dictionary, in the following terms:—"Li K'e-yung 李克用 Died A.D. 908. A renowned commander, who flourished towards the close of the T'ang dynasty. His father, whose surname was 朱耶 was a chieftain of a Turkic tribe occupying a region near Lake Balkash. He himself took service with the Imperial forces and aided so efficiently in repelling the Turan invaders that in 869 the Emperor I Tsung conferred upon him the Imperial surname Li, adding to it the honorary name 國昌 Kuo Ch'ang. In 884 he put down the rebellion of Huang Ch'ao. In 907 he set up the independent state of Chin in Shansi, with his capital at T'aiyuanfu, and adopted 天祐 (used by the last T'ang Emperor) as his reigning title. He excelled in archery, and marvellous tales are told of his skill. From having lost the sight of one eye, he became known as the 獨眼龍 "Tu Yen-lung" (One-eyed dragon)".

It will be observed that Professor Giles' account of Li K'ê-yung differs in some details from what I learned of him at Tamingch'êng. He makes him to die in the year 908, the year after the T'ang dynasty ceased to exist, but the 綱鑑 Kang Chien (Historical Record) distinctly speaks of him as being active also in the time of the Hou Liang Chi. Giles agrees that he aspired to princely rank, but while the name of his kingdom, Chin, agrees with local tradition as gleaned by me, the location differs. One hesitates to set one's peripatetic investigations against the erudition of a Giles, but undoubtedly there was once a Ta Min-ch'eng: there is still a Ta Ming-t'a, and the name of Li K'ê-yung is indissolubly associated with both. May it not be that not at T'aiyuanfu, but at Tamingch'eng, in the Shat'okuo, did Li K'ê-yung set up his new kingdom?

Dr. Faber, in his Chronological History of China, also makes reference to the prowess of Li K'ê-yung. See pages, 133-135 and 138.

So much for the founding of the famous city and its pagoda. What about the destruction of the former? For this tradition I am indebted to the old "sien-seng" (tutor) of the wealthy home I stayed in while there, and it is probably as near the truth as anything that can be learned now. Hung Wu, the first Emperor of the Ming Dynasty, had just wrested the kingdom from the Mongol Yuan Dynasty, and seated himself upon the Dragon Throne in the year 1368 A.D. Among his most loyal supporters was one Chiên Wen, who when the hurly-burly attendant on the change of dynasty was over, wished to retire from office and return to his ancestral home near Nanking. His elder brother was then in residence at Tamingch'eng, governing in the name of his Emperor the old kingdom of the Sha T'e, then and in the time of the Yuan dynasty incorporated in the Chinese Empire. Chiên Wen, while violently homesick, was also very wishful that his elder brother should resign office with him and that they should retire together to their old home and settle down in peace. But his brother would not be persuaded. The sweets of

office yet charmed him, and even though Thiên Wen got the wife (also a native of Nanking) of his elder brother to join him in his pleas, my lord the Viceroy was not to be turned from his purpose. Persuasion failing, the woman's wit invented a plan, which she confided to Chiên Wen, who immediately proceeded to put it into execution. Urging the unsettled state of the country, as well as reminding his brother of the high position he (the brother) held as Governor-General of all this vast region, and pretending that he was about to return to Nanking alone, Chiên Wen now asked his brother to provide him with an escort of 4,000 men, and as a token of brotherly affection, to himself accompany him a distance of forty li. The good-natured brother readily agreed, and with much *éclat* and in almost regal splendour, the two brothers set out together. No sooner had they gone than "milady" packed her most precious valuables on carts and animals that she had already secretly prepared, and set out after her liege lord and his brother Chiên Wen. Before leaving the city, however, she caused it to be set on fire in several places, and when her husband, returning from escorting his brother, met his wife on the road, she with many ears and in great sorrow, told him that it was no use returning, as Heaven had sent fire and the whole place was being reduced to ashes. "And that," concluded the old scholar, "was the end of the Ta Ming-ch'eng." "Shoh shï T'ien-ho, k'o shï jên fang-tih. (She said it was fire from Heaven, but it was really started by men). Since that time there has been, of course, no attempt to rebuild. Fortunately the pagoda wasbeyond the range of the flames, and still stands in its glory, a superb monument to somebody's artistic taste, industryand conscientious workmanship.

Passing through the village of Mêng-chiawop'u, we avoid the theatre some little distance to the north of us, which is the great centre of attraction for the crowd, and continue west towards the pagoda. It is now just nine a.m. We mount the remnants of an inner wall of the once-famous city, to find to our surprise that the pagoda is still nearly half-a-mile away. The observant Yuan Min calls my attention to the quantity of broken bricks and tiles strewn all about the land we are walking over, débris of the once-proud city that sheltered a self-crowned king. So numerous are they that it would be a practical impossibility to clear the ground of them, so the tillers of the soil have just resigned themselves to the inevitable, and the land is sown with the bricks and tiles scattered about in prodigal profusion wherever you step.

The crowds of people around and about the pagoda are surprisingly large. We pick our way carefully over the ground already under cultivation, climb the steps in the midst of the merry-making Mongols, and find ourselves facing four be-gowned and be-cowled Lamas, chanting their eternal praise of "P'u Sa Arimata." (The Mongol version of "Oh, the jewel in the lotus.") Round and round the base of the pagoda the crowd is circling. We follow, after I have first stopped in its shadow, to change the films in my kodak, during which mysterious operation I am surrounded by a mass of perspiring people. Here are squatted on the ground a few vagrant Lamas, who loudly offer to spin their hand

prayer-wheels for us, if we will give them a few cash. I hold up a bright silver dollar to one, and tell him that that shall be his, if he will let me have his quaint prayer-wheel for myself. He refuses, but I imagine it is fear of the crowd, and not love for his wheel, that influences him. It makes him bad to see that dollar slip past him. There are several men, young and old, counting their beads, and mumbling their prayers, pushing rapidly through the crowd, yet halting every three or four yards to knock their heads in what they mean to be reverence against the wall. And here is a poor woman, in appearance about forty years of age, who is slowly measuring her full length round the pagoda, lying face downwards on the stones, making a mark with her outstretched hands, knocking her head three times on the ground as she lies there, and then rising, advancing to where she has made her marks, and repeating the same exhausting process all the way round. It is a sight which stirs one's heart to the depths. She regards not the crowds; looks not at the two strangers from afar; intent upon her self-imposed task, thus seeking merit with the Buddha. It means much to her. It is not the missionary, but the man in me, that notes the intensely wretched expression on her face. It is not the missionary, but the man in me, that longs to tell her that all this is a work of supererogation: that God "is not far from every one of us, for in Him we live, and move and have our being": that He needs not to be besought and propitiated in this way. But she is in a highly-strung nervous condition; "whether in the body or out of it" she cannot tell: in that state in which martyrdom would be easy, and in which many martyrs have gone triumphant to the stake; and to speak to her just now would be as though one were to address an image of stone. We can only turn away with pity for her ignorance, and sorrow for her misguided devotion.

We slowly complete the circuit of the pagoda, and here we are back to the front, where the four Lamas, in their brown hoods and cloaks, looking for all the world like Franciscan monks, are still chanting their solemn dirge. Before them now is kneeling a company of eight or ten Mongol men and women. The censer is full of smoking incense, which fills the air with its pungent fragrance. We stop to watch the unusual scene. One of the Lamas takes from the altar what appears to be a double dish of yellow millet (hsiao mi). One of these he hands to a man kneeling before him, who takes and holds it reverently for a few minutes before his face, repeating prayers meanwhile, and then carefully hands it back to the Lama. A second Lama now takes up a small brass teapot, from which he pours out a few drops only of some liquid, into the outstretched right hands of the kneeling devotees. He uses his right hand in pouring out, but his left is equally busy taking in, for to none of the worshippers does he grant the water until they have first given him a few cash. There is no "chit-system" here. This is a ready-money store. The recipients of the water instantly put it to their lips, sip a little with evident relish, and with the remainder anoint their heads, rubbing it well into their hair. Then, with a few more prostrations before the Lamas, they rise up and give place to another group, and so I

presume, does the process continue throughout the day. An old Lama, evidently a visitor, is standing near me, a silent spectator as I am. I turn to him and ask him what the liquid is that is poured out from the brass teapot, and what is the meaning of it all? Before he can answer, a young Chinaman blurts out that it is simply plain water from the well near by, and that the Lamas are simply hoodwinking the people. But the old Lama emphatically protests that it is "holy water" from "Fo Yêh" (Buddha), and that the ceremony is "h:o" (good). In what respect it is specially good he does not say, and I try to show to him and others near "a more excellent way." But preaching is impossible in such a Bedlam as this, and in a few minutes we leave the pagoda behind us, and pass into the Lama temple at its foot.

Here we come first upon an enormous prayer-wheel, fourteen to sixteen feet high, which requires several small boys to set it in motion. They begin turning as we enter the room, as though they wish us to share in its virtues—and contribute to its upkeep. For remember, in Lamaism as we see it here, nothing is done for nothing, no matter who the worshipper may be. We do not feel the need of the prayers, nor do we assist to swell the collection. So we turn away to the main hall. Here at the entrance are two lusty Lamas loudly chanting prayers. Inside are some thirty more seated before their low benches, droning out their quaint plaint. Among them we count sixteen small boys, and their trembling treble voices harmonise exquisitely with the deep rich bass of the older men. Four Lamas stand behind an altar in which are lighted shrines, though what they are I cannot make out, and do not care to enter while their worship is going on. For even though one is an unbeliever, and knows how vain and profitless is all such worship as this, yet it becomes one in all circumstances to respect the feelings of those who do worship here. No good has ever been done in the world by empty ridicule, or insulting discourtesy, and a preacher of the true faith should surely in these matters, be "a pattern of good works."

We go now to a smaller hall in front and find there what I have never seen anywhere before, viz., a *standing* Buddha. The sweet and gracious face would charm an artist's soul, or win a devotee's love. One slender golden hand is upraised in blessing; the other outstretched as if in gentle entreaty. I am bound to confess that this image moves me profoundly. There is in it a visible parable of my Master, of Whom these poor people know nothing; Who needs not images nor idols to bring Him near; and I can hear, deep-sounding in my soul those, so wondrous yet familiar words:—"Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." It is indeed a lovely picture. A lovely allegory. It spells "rest, rest to the weary." And I turn away with the depths of my spirit moved at the sensuous beauty and imagery of Lama ritual and faith, though my heart is sad within me at the thought that it is so mixed up with ignorance, superstition and vice.

I use the last word advisedly, because I cannot but believe that the Lamas in the main are a lazy, rascally, vicious set, who trade upon their own ignorance and the credulity of the people. Good men, men who spend their lives in the

pursuit of truth, or the contemplation of virtue, would not have such faces as the majority of the Lamas have. The hallmark of sin, sometimes in some of its most vicious forms, is there for anyone to see. But I will not at present dwell on what is, to say the least, an unsavoury topic.

We seek now the lodging that has been secured for us in the home of a Chinese gentleman who is said to be the wealthiest man in the wide Pakou district. If there is a wealthier I should like to know him, for our host, Mr. Ting, owns seven thousand mow (nearly 1,200 English acres) of land; feeds over forty mules and horses, besides a stock of oxen and sheep, and employs no fewer than seventy men to manage his farm. He, too, admits that a great portion of his land is given up to the cultivation of opium, as being the most profitable crop. He is a very simple-mannered man of forty-three, whose father has died only six months before our visit. His bereavement is given as a reason for declining my offer to photograph him and his family. For generations the family have been archers, holding the military degree for proficiency in archery from the throne. This degree "mine host" has not secured, and he tells me a pathetic tale of having gone to Peking a few years ago to compete, only to find when he got there that the old custom had been abrogated, and his hopes of sustaining the old glory of his ancestors perished. He is, however, so enormously wealthy that I have no doubt sooner or later he will "chüan" (purchase) official rank, and so bring honour on his forbears while he adds grist to the Imperial mill. He has ambitions too, to travel in foreign lands, and suggests that some day perhaps we will come across each other in England.

We have a quiet, secluded pair of rooms assigned to us, where we are far from the prying curiosity of the crowd. The village is named T'iehchiangyingtzu (The Ironsmith's Camp); the theatre is just a few steps from my host's front gate; but we have undertaken that none of the natives outside shall be permitted to enter the compound, and so we spend the hours in almost perfect peace. It will not surprise anyone who knows China to learn that even such a wealthy man as this Mr. Ting was, did not dare to do anything to offend his neighbours. Hence he made it quite clear to my men (this I did not learn till next day), that he could only allow us to reside in his house on condition that we took the responsibility of getting rid of any over-inquisitive crowds that might want to see the foreigners. How we had to fulfil our obligations will presently appear.

In the afternoon, wishful to secure with my large camera some photographs of the holiday crowd and the pagoda, we wend our way outside, and I manage to get round me the biggest mass of people I have ever been treated to in China. When the foreigner appears, the theatre loses all its interest; the gambling booths shed their charm; and even the all-important duty of feasting is delayed. I contrive to get my camera set up on the ancient wall, and take two pictures of the collection of mat-covered carts, and the motley gathering of gaily-dressed humanity before the stage. But the crowd grows rapidly, and crushes round us in such eagerness that my poor tripod is threatened with

destruction. We move off towards the pagoda, for I am anxious to have a large picture of it, but it is a matter of the greatest difficulty to make any progress. Realising that the nearer we get to the pagoda, the larger will be the crowd, and the more difficult a satisfactory picture (Chinese crowds spoil scores of plates for the amateur camera fiend), I set the camera up in the middle of the field, in a sort of desperate attempt to make the best of it. With hundreds upon hundreds of heads crushing round us, and thousands of eyes peering at our strange instrument, I expose the plate, and then whisper to Yuan Min to carry the camera back to our lodging as quickly as possible. I too, turn for home, and now ensues such a rushing and a pushing; such a squalling and a scrambling, as I have never seen anywhere in my life before. The dust rises up in clouds, until our clothes are covered and our throats are choked. Several of the more eager or forward, pushing near in their anxiety to see me, stumble and fall, and are in danger of being trampled on. Yuan Min, with the camera, discreetly steers off about two hundred yards south of us, and walks along in comparative quiet. My writer Wêng remains at my side, but his temper shows signs of testiness, and I have a few times to rebuke him and tell him to curb himself, and not to forget that we are only two against a multitude. Fortunately the crowd is good-natured, and I do my best to make a joke of the whole affair, and walk along in their midst as if such experiences were an everyday occurence with me. But I remember that crowds anywhere, and especially in China, are always such uncertain quantities that one has to be careful lest a hasty word or push should lead to a riot, and so I am honestly anxious to be beyond such "pressing" attentions. Approaching the old wall, we find it black with people waiting to receive us. I climb up amongst them, laugh up at them with a joke, and before they have had time to recover from their guffaw, or have had their fill of looking, I am down on the other side, and heading in a bee-line for Mr. Ting's front door. With a breath of relief I reach there, the people still on my heels. I turn now and face them, put my hands together in orthodox fashion, thank them in the most courtly Chinese I know for the honour they have done me in escorting me to my temporary home, but implore them to remember that I am but a guest here, and ask them not to make any trouble, kindly, but to disperse to their pleasure-making at the fair. And with this I escape to my room, thankful that a most exciting quarter of an hour has come to an end. But in a few minutes one of the servants of the house rushes to my room to say that the people have crowded into the compound, and refuse to leave. My Chinese assistants call on Marisami to go and scare them, and he, an old soldier, is nothing loth to play the policeman. But I fear a riot, if there is not extreme care on our part, so I hasten out myself, and singling out one or two older men in the crowd, I appeal to them to favour me by persuading the people to disperse. I remind them that they have moustaches, and are therefore amenable to reason. (I am not joking, gentle reader. A moustache is a much more wonderful thing in China than what it is in the West). And I commend my plan to brother foreigners, in similar circumstances. Do not lose

your temper: above all, never threaten: simply appeal to the man nearest to you who fondles a few straggling hairs on his lips, and for the proper dressing of which he carries a small-tooth comb. In most cases, the ruse will answer. A very few minutes will suffice to scatter your crowd. It was so in this case, and in less than five minutes all these people had gone, save only one disconsolate yokel who had lost his shoe in the scramble.

Near to this old pagoda, there is the country residence of a Mongol Duke, and during the afternoon I am favoured with a visit from his eldest son. The Duke himself has gone to meet and confer with Prince Su at the palace of the Haraschin Prince. The son is a sturdy-looking fellow of thirty-three, who of course speaks excellent Chinese, and who tells me that in this Eastern district there are altogether thirty-six Mongol "ch'i" or banners. Of these, Pakou controls three; T'atzukou, three; Hata, seven; and Ch'aoyang, four; all these being subject to the Tartar General at Jehol. The remainder are under the supervision of the Tartar General at Mukden. He also tells me that once every year his father and himself must go to Peking for official duty in the Imperial Household. I learn later that the Duke is responsible for the care of one of the principal gates in the Palace, and that all the Mongol Princes and Dukes have duty of some kind or other that calls them to the capital every year—in some few cases, once every two years.

I photograph this genial young scion of a Ducal house, and after a long and pleasant chat, escort him to where four splendid cream-coloured ponies are waiting for him and his followers I am later informed that his father is a "T'ai P'ing Wang"; that is, he has no administrative authority in his dis rict, that power being vested in the Haraschin Prince two hundred li away. But the ancestors of this Duke had rendered considerable service to the Manchu dynasty when they overthrew the Ming, and were rewarded by being placed in this fruitful spot as Kung Yêh.

This exciting May-day is now drawto a close. Mine host, learning that I am likely to visit England next year, and that in that great country I have yet a mother living; asks me to accept one of his ancestral bows and arrows as a memento of my visit, and take them home to let the old "t'ai-t'ai" (lady) there see what an ancient bow and arrow from China are like. I instruct my servant to give an additional "cumshaw" to the servants of our host, since he absolutely refuses to accept any payment for himself, and we part with mutual protestations of esteem, and "hope to meet again."

ALONG THE LAOHO TO HATA.

We were now to begin what was to prove the most fatiguing part of our trip, viz., to trace the course of the Laoho from the Tamingch'êng until we reached its point of junction with the Shire Muren. The Laoho rises some sixty miles south-west of where we now are, in a district that bears the Mongol name of Huruktu, transliterated by the Chinese into Huoerhhuok'êho. Flowing through a small village named Heichêng, the next important place it touches is the Tamingch'êng, 120 li further north, where as I have already said, the water at the time of our visit is both narrow and shallow and of course quite unfitted for anything in the way of navigation.

The river itself enjoys a very unenviable reputation, and is indeed spoken of in the district as being just as uncertain and treacherous as the Yellow River itself, China's sorrow par excellence. In the rainy season, it swells rapidly and deepens its channel to a dangerous depth, frequently doing much harm to standing crops, and causing those peasants who have land near its banks to watch its vagaries with not a little anxiety. The last most serious inundation occurred in 1883, when it overflowed its banks, destroyed the crops for many miles on either side, and even claimed its toll of human life. Thus in the summer time the question of crossing the river is a very serious one. At certain places as we pass along, we see temporary plank-bridges over specially narrow parts, to walk which in safety must be almost as difficult a feat as to attempt an amateur tight-rope performance. One old countryman anxious to get to the theatre does not dare to "walk the plank" at one place, but taking off his boots and stockings, essays to wade across. Within a few yards of the other shore, he suddenly finds a very deep spot, and has then to climb up on to the plank, along which he carefully crawls on his hands and knees till he reaches terra-firma. This was near Paokulu, where the main road crosses to Hata, and where the river, though not broad, flows both deep and strong. Further north, we found old flat-bottomed boats at certain points, used as ferries. While still further up, near the "grassland," where a boat has never been seen, and none of the natives seem to have any idea of how to build one, the river can only be forded at distinctly marked places, at other spots being treacherous, slimy mud, in which the native affirms it would be an easy thing to be swallowed up. But in the heavy rains, when the river swells to abnormal size, and fording is impossible! What happens then? asks the reader. Just what I asked of the native, to receive the nonchalant reply, "Oh, then you have just got to wait till the rains cease and the floods subside, and then ford across as before." Happy

land, where time is of no consequence, and man can wait upon the tide for a safe crossing! Of that crossing more anon.

Fortunately, on the section of the river we are now traversing, there is no need for us to cross. All we have to do is to keep to the northern bank, and follow along as best we can. But this task is none of the easiest. We have chosen mules for baggage transport rather than carts, as being better fitted for river exploration And we fondly indulge the hope that there will be no path, however narrow; and no road, however rough, along which we cannot all safely travel. But five miles out from Tamingch'éng we get our first stop, and our notions of where a mule can and cannot go, have to be suddenly corrected. Marisami and I are making steadily ahead, and meet a narrow path on the edge of the cliff near the small hamlet of T'aip'ingchuang (Village of Great Peace). We pass along very cautiously, my sure-footed Hansi and his little donkey-friend picking their way sagaciously over the stones. Half-a-mile further on the road suddenly turns due north, and another bearing is necessary. We sit down to wait for the table, and sit there nearly an hour. And when the sturdy Yuan Min at length arrives, it is to report that the leading mule, in attempting to get along the narrow path just mentioned, has run great risk of being precipitated into the river, and it has been necessary to unload every mule (a task of no small difficulty where there is so little standing-room) turn t heir noses round, load them up again and then retreat for a couple of li to find a way over the high hill that towers up above T'aipingchuang. And so we realise at the outset that we are not to have things all our own way as we follow the soft-flowing and sinuous stream of the old river.

A little further on, and we receive another check. We have just passed the straggling village of Ts'unchiawop'u (Shed of the Ts'un family). Marisami, Wêng and myself, as usual, are walking on ahe ad, while Yuan Min trudges on behind us with his burden; the mules being about a li still further behind. On the other side of the river is the second Kushantzu (Orphan Hill) we have met on our tramp; when, without any preliminary warning, we find ourselves stopped by a precipitous and far-stretching ravine from thirty to fifty feet deep, down the sides of which one can no more lead a pony than you can teach him to fly. We have often heard of and as often wished to see the loess formation of Shansi, and in a small measure, we have species of somewhat kindred land around Yungp'ingfu. But this is the real article, and we have to meet it for some ten or fifteen miles more. There is nothing for it but to slowly and carefully follow the ravine down to where it loses itself in the sand at the very edge of the river, where we crawl down one bank and climb up another, and so reach the other side. But again the mules must make a wide detour, and have to strike inland a few miles, coming down into the village of Ssuchia (Four Homes, where we are waiting for them), over the top of another high hill where runs the only cart-road of the neighbourhood.

This village of Four Homes, where we now stop for our morning meal, is a poor sample of a Chinese hamlet. The only inn it boasts is closed up, "muh-yu mai-mai" (no business), being

the reason given in answer to our enquiries. But the landlord is a decent sort of chap, and when we represent that "we want but little here below, but want that little quick," he cheerfully says, "Well, we would be a poor lot if we had no fresh water and small millet. Come in and make the best of what we have." Now, one can always get along with a man of that stamp, and I state the bare truth when I say that when the shutters of the closed inn have been thrown open, and a certain amount of the long-accumulated dust has been stirred up—the landlord thinks he has swept it out;—when mine host has got his wife to work to cook a bowl of meal for my hungry men; when Marisami and I have dissected the remains of an ancient fowl that had crowed his last crow but yesterday, and the whole has been washed down with copious draughts of the ever-present and ever-welcome Chinese tea, we vote that we have had as good a time as a company of tramps need wish for.

Here I am specially struck with a peculiar and uncouth dialect in all the Chinese we meet. As an old resident of Shantung (which, though it produced the immortal sage, Confucius, and his great disciple, Mencius, yet rejoices in a series of dialects that are regarded most contemptuously by all Chihli residents, especially near the capital), the accent I hear in Ssuchia strikes on my ear with sweet(!) familiarity. I ask mine host whence came the dwellers in these parts, and am not surprised by the answer Shantung. But, wonder upon wonders, they have been settled here for six generations. Not a man of the many who are now seated in the inn chatting with me has ever seen, or is likely to see, Shantung. Yet the Shantung brogue hurls itself at you most unmistakably, and has been handed down from father to son through all these two hundred years, and they still speak with the curious intonations and slurs that mark the peasant in the Shantung province to-day. It is a remarkable example of cleavage to type.

And what we find at Ssuchia, we find with but few exceptions, in all the villages we stop at all the weary way to the "grass-land." Wherever we find pure Chinese living in a village, we find they are Shantung people, mostly from the three prefectures of Têngchou, Laichou and Ch'ingchou; clannish and rough as ever; hard-working and patient as of old. And we do not come across more than two or three men of all the scores we meet, who have been even near Shantung, or have any hopes of getting there on a visit. Yes, there is one Chinese settlement that is not peopled by Shantungese. That is the most northerly of all we touched, but that is another tale, which will come in due course.

At Ssuchia, I notice another peculiar phenomenon. The river, as I have already said, flows swiftly north-east. The aneroid at Tamingch'eng had registered 1,780 feet; at Ssuchia, ten miles further on, 1,900 feet. So that the river is actually flowing upwards, though naturally the people speak of it as "Wanghsialiu" (flowing downwards). Next morning, however, the aneroid at Sanshihchiatzu registers only 1,800 feet; the day after 1,620 feet, and from here onwards it falls steadily lower, until at the confluence of the Laoho and Shira Muren—our most northerly point, which we reached three weeks later—the aneroid registers no more than 700 feet

above the level of the sea. This means that though the river flows always north-east there is a gradual dip in the land, of 1,100 feet in the distance of three hundred miles.

The day has become intensely hot when we start out for a short march of five miles to Sanshihchiatzu (Thirty Homes), a large and prosperous looking village. We find the innkeeper a surly churl; the inn, a dirty, and I fear, disreputable place; and the villagers, the most uncouth and unmannerly people we have so far met. At first they tell us they have no room for our large party; and gauging pretty accurately the sort of place we have reached, I am actually out of the yard into the street, and prepared for a further march, hot as it is, when we are called back by some idlers to find that a party of opium-smokers have been cajoled into giving place to us. But the room into which we are introduced is evil-smelling, and the first thing necessary is to tear open the window, and let some of Nature's pure air rush in. The place is more habitable then, but a large crowd of villagers gather opposite our gdoor, and spend their spare time in darin every new-comer to go and have a look at the two "foreign devils" who have arrived. We try several times to rest, but the rabble outside denies us, and it is only when we scare the landlord by telling him we will report him for discourtesy to guests, that we get anything like freedom from bold and peering eyes, and insolent remarks.

In this district again we see the villagers diligently watering the opium plants. The drought has continued long. Rain they have not had since last autumn: of snow there fell but little during the winter. But the proximity of the river makes irrigation comparatively easy and they have here an ingenious though home-made method of irrigation. With long poles, they make a two or three-fold lever, weighted down by heavy, circular stones at one end, while on the other end are the closely woven native water-baskets called "tou.' They cut a channel from the river into which they conduct the water, or when that is not possible, they have wells dug in the middle of their fields. At each pole is a man who simply guides the lever. The weight of the stone brings up the full basket of water, which empties itself into a trough, the water then finding its way in and out among the plants at the pleasure of the labourer. It reminds one of the Irishman's theory that "the man at the top does the whole of the work." Certainly irrigation is accomplished at a comparatively small expenditure of labour and time.

As we advance next morning, we find that the character of the ground-loess formation makes it impossible for some thirty li for us to follow closely by the side of the river. We have therefore to strike inland at Meiliyingtzu, a village that to all appearance is doomed within the next few years to tumble into the wide and deep ravine that yawns at its southerly side. Even now, the village can only be entered by crossing a rough bridge that has been flung across the ravine, and as each rainy season carries away part of the earth, it would seem that the days of Meiliyingtzu—a Mongol settlement—are numbered. Perhaps it is the danger that threatens them that explains the multitude (many more than is usual) of scrolls and bannerettes that grace the walls of almost every house in the village.

We see more of the loess formation as we advance towards T'apayingtzu, and come also upon the source of a small stream that follows the course of one of the ravines till it joins the Kunt'uho, which in its turn flows into the Laoho at a little place called Nanch'uan. T'apayingtzu is a quaint place divided into four distinct parts, known respectively as "Shang"; "Hsia"; "Nan": "Pei"; that is, Upper, Lower, South and North. To reach it we must first pass through a few hundred yards of sand-dunes, along which it is by no means easy going. Passing the southern section of the settlement, we must ford the K'untuho, which though narrow at present, gives token of widening largely in the time of the summer rains. And then in the northern village we find a wretched inn, where amidst a conglomeration of agricultural implements and a stock of cut straw piled in the principal guest-room, I eat my meal with the sauce of a traveller's philosophy, which, however fond it may be of the trappings of civilisation, finds hunger the best appetiser, and is content if there be enough to satisfy the needs of the moment. My needs that day are not minute, for I have walked over two hours before mounting the pony, and have been off his back twice or thrice in the ten-miles tramp.

We have by this time made the circuit of the hills which line the northern bank of the river, and as we go along towards Kaoliongkantzutien, we are gradually getting nearer to the river again. Kaolingkantzutien in its very name announces its Shantung origin. In all the broad districts east of the capital, the long kaoling sticks used for garden palings and household fuel are spoken of as "Shu Chie" (Ripe Stalks). But the Shantung name for the same article is "Kaoliang Kantzu" (Kaoliang sticks). Hence the village we stay at now, in a tolerably quiet and comfortable inn, is the Inn of the Kaoliang Sticks. The road from T'apayingtzu to this village is very easy and level. A few li out we see away to the east of us a large but dilapidated Lama Temple. That we are told is the Kaniashumiao, where, clustered at its feet, are the numbers of huts that accommodate from four to five hundred Lamas, of the type we have already met at Tamingch'êng.

On this road too, we find that all the larger houses, and many of the smaller, have built round them high and massive mud-walls; each corner, as well as the main entrance, having small battlemented towers of the kind usually seen at Chinese cities, with eye-holes in the towers through which a rifle might be fired. This is all eloquent of the normal condition of things in these districts where the Chinese official rarely penetrates, and where the poor native has to live in a state of constant preparedness, lest the "gentlemen of the road" should make a sudden swoop, and clear out their prime horses and their prettiest girls.

On the next morning, May 4, we are once more trudging along in the sand and gravel of the river-bed, while the mules are slowly marching on the main road. Two miles from Kaoliangkantzutien, we come upon what appears to be a small military encampment, built on the high land immediately facing a fine stone bridge that, at the village of Machüantzu, stretches across the river. We hail a passing peasant and ask what this is, and why and by whom erected? As surmised, it is by way of being a small barracks erected by one

Li Kuei, five years ago, to be used against the brigands, who then laid the land waste, and sought to cross the river by the bridge above named.

This Li Kuei is evidently a man of more than ordinary note. We learn later that he was originally a native of T'ait'ouying, a busy market-town about 25 miles from our own city of Yungp'ingfu. Years ago, when he was but a young lad, he came outside the wall as personal attendant to some old Lama who had picked up this smart but destitute boy in his wanderings. Now we are told that Li Kuei is the leading man of his district. He has never returned to his native place; has been content to remain outside the wall and in the course of the years amass wealth. How all he has touched has turnod to gold, is a story of which we do not learn the details. But certain is it that in the nèighbourhood we are now passing through, Li Kuei is spoken of as "pi chihchou, ch'üan ping ta" (having greater power than the official). He farms several hundreds of mow of land; owns pawnshops and distilleries in different places; and to crown all, is said to be the proprietor of a large and famous inn at Peking called the Tayutien. The old gentleman is evidently of bucolic temperament, for the tale goes that if at any time any of his numerous pawnshops and distilleries do not pay a good dividend, he proceeds direct himself to administer corporal punishment to the manager thereof. And many a man he is said to have "ta-p'ao-liao" (beaten till they ran away). Hence when report was brought that the brigands were moving in his direction, Li Kuei, wise man, did not waste time in sending for assistance where it was not likely to be secured. On the "heaven helps those who help themselves" principle, he called his neighbours and friends together, represented in this crisis "if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it," and advised the speedy formation of a local militia for mutual protection and defence, of which he himself at once took over the command. But not content with this, he caused the prompt erection of the miniature barracks above-named, right facing the spot at which the brigands were und to cross the river, if they came that way at all. They came eventually, but they never got across the river, for the intrepid Li Kuei and his merry men were there to welcome them and after a conflict in which the brigands got the worst of it, they having no cover and being exposed to heavy fire from the camp, they turned off to seek "fresh woods and pastures new." And the praise of Li Kuei is in everybody's mouth to-day.

We have a novel experience this morning. Having to cross a small stream that flows into the main river, I venture first on the crossing, Wêng, the writer, following close at my heels on the donkey. I have no sooner got into the stream than I find we are in an Irish bog, and have to call out to Wêng not to attempt to cross on Neddy. My pony sinks in the mud at every step; snorts and puffs in terror as he struggles to carry me across. There we find ourselves in a bank of soft yielding sand, into which Hansl immediately sinks up to his body and I have simply to step out of the saddle, and scramble up with him as best I can to the hard soil above. The sagacious little ass behind, with no one to bear him down, carefully picks his steps across, and comes in a good second.

But how to get the three men across is now the question. Wêng valiantly

offers to carry Marisami over on his back and stripping off his shoes and stockings, they start off. Choosing the hardest parts he can find, he yet sinks in the mud up to his knees. But he lands his man across, and then as generously offers to carry Yuan Min over in the same way. But Yuan thinks better of it, and taking off his own shoes and socks, and profiting by our experience who have crossed before him, he makes a sort of detour, and gingerly feeling the ground with his feet before he allows his weight to bear down we all are across the narrow stream with nothing worse than a healthy scare for us all, and muddy feet and legs for the two Chinese. But it can be understood that with such crossings as this to make every now and again, the work of surveying the Laoho was no mere holiday jaunt.

We have just got across this nasty bit and I am riding ahead, when I see a short distance away what I think is a specially large and strong yellowish-brown dog. He is walking leisurely away from the river and I call out to him with the dog-lover's usual interest in a fine specimen. He takes no notice of me and I set him down as an unsociable creature who does not know English. I hear my men behind discussing him somewhat loudly, but intent on the road before us, I pay no particular attention until I am startled by a great hue and cry, and turn round to see a company of men who are working in the fields "chivvying" Mr. Yellow Dog away back towards the river, near where we have just crossed the bog. And then it dawns on my dull understanding that my extra fine canine friend is a wolf. No wonder that he disregarded my "Poor fellow! Come here then." He was the only wolf we saw all the way round, but he was worth seeing. And perhaps it was as well our acquaintance with him was restricted to sight.

We have our midday meal at Huangchiawop'u, where, in the house of a wealthy man, we have to seek accommodation through there being no inn in the place. Our wealthy friend is evidently afraid of the two foreign members of our party, for while the Chinese are invited into the principal compound to partake of the meal that is prepared for them, we are planted in a small room in another yard to eat our own food; and where we have as the most conspicuous articles of furniture, two massive coffins, fortunately, for our digestion, if not our peace of mind, both empty.

The heat when we resume is almost overpowering and our tramp degenerates into a crawl in the afternoon. At one village we are glad to seek the friendly shade of a high wall round a compound, and with no regard for appearances, sink down upon the ground for a rest. Here we meet with an incident that I venture to say is of very rare occurrence in this polite and courteous nation of the East. Parched and thirsty with heat and dust, Wêng starts towards the gate of one compound and asks a labourer loitering round for a drink of water. "There is no water here," is the sulky response he gets. "Then I will go into this yard," says Wêng, making towards the gate of the compound near which we are resting. "There is no water there either. If you want a drink you will find a well along the street. Go there yourself and get it," growls out the boor at the door. Now this is so unusual a thing in China, that for once I get out of temper. I ask that man who has had the honour of bringing him up, that he has acquired such elegant and hospitable manners; and without

INN YARD AT MEILIHO, NEAR 'HATA.

STREET SCENE AT HATA WITH CART. WRIGHT'S STOCK-IN-TRADE PILED UP.

LAMA ABBOT OF WÉNGNIUT'Ê, HATA.

of course descending to the filthy language in which a Chinaman would have expressed his indignation, I give that man such a dressing-down that in a few minut s he slinks away like a whipped cur with his tail between legs, and we see him no more. But by this time others have emerged from the house we are near, and I turn to the oldest and most respectable and ask him (since I am an ignorant stranger) if he will kindly tell me whether in their domicile they raise up men or wild animals, that even a "cup of cold water" is denied to a passing guest. It turns out that the house is a distillery, and with many protestations of regret for the ignorant boorishness of the man who has disappeared, they invite us to enter, that they may place before us both tea and wine. But we decline all their invitations and with a parting shot to the effect that we would not even sup their wine (for another reason than they imagined) we leave them, seriously shamefaced and, I hope, sincerely sorry, for their lack of good breeding. For a Chinaman would rather lose dollars than "face," and the unwritten law of manners demand that never shall they be lacking in that cheap and common courtesy that will show itself even to a tired traveller. And it is in the hope that this fault will not be repeated here, that for a few minutes I have let myself go, and saturated these people with the most scathing sarcasm that my tongue can command in the Chinese speech.

This afternoon lands us into a decent village, with a capital inn, called Meilho. We are now only twenty miles from Hata in a direct line, but there are twenty miles of river that will remain unexplored by us if we go straight to the city from here. We decide therefore to follow the river still in an Easterly direction to the markee town of Chiench'angying, from whence we will turn again due West, and leavt ing the river for a days, pay a visit to the important barter market of Ch'hifenghsien.

The road along the va lley to Chiênch'ang for the first ten miles is a most beautiful but fatiguing one. Beautiful by reason of the rich groves of graceful poplars and willows th rough which we have to pass, and which afford a grateful shelter from the burning rays of the sun. Fatiguing because the route is laid in the sand, and we find it none too easy to get steadily along when the going is so heavy. From Machiatzu, where we have our meal, on to Chiênch'ang we have yet another species of ground to march over. We are close by the side of the river, but the road is some fifteen or twenty feet above the water, and the land is, for the most part, uncultivated, and still in the condition known as "huang-ti" (desert.) There is a sparsity of population here, for there are acres upon acres of and waiting for the plough, and in the main it is good, and likely to be profitable, land. Already we imagine ourselves in the grass-land, though the very few hamlets we pass are inhabited, not by Mongols, but by colonists from Shantung, settled here, as lower down, five or six generations ago.

We reach Chiênch'angying about three o'clock in the afternoon, and find ourselves in the first walled village we have seen since leaving the Chiênch'angying with'n the Great Wall, only twenty miles from Yungp'ingfu. This "gloriously-established barracks"

has all the appearance of a rough border-town. It boasts a proper military camp, with a company of so-called cavalry under the supreme command of the Tartar General at Jehol. The officer commanding here is one Fêng Shen-yin, but we have not the opportunity of making his acquaintance. He went out a week ago to chase the brigands that have been infesting the district for so ong and reportsl have come in of a fierce fight waged some five hundred li away to the North East in which seven robbers have been killed, and a few of their horses captured. Consequently there are not more than ten or a dozen men here in charge of the town, but from what I see of them, I should not care to describe them as being capable of doing much damage, if it came to fighting. The people, also mostly Shantung bred, are a rowdy, noisy lot, who no sooner hear of the arrival of two foreigners than they besiege our inn, poke their fingers through the paper windows; push open and peer through the creaking doors, and otherwise behave in that manner so characteristic of the country Chinese who have never seen a son of the West before. Never before has there been a foreigner in this little town, so in the hope that if they have a good look for a while, they will go and leave us in peace, I go out amongst them, show them that I have but one nose, one mouth, two eyes, two ears, two hands and two legs, and further draw their special attentions to the fact that though I do boast a "hung-hu-tzu" (red moustache), I am not a "ma-t'a-tzu" (mounted robber), and ask them when they have looked their fill, to clear out and leave us alone for a while. My scheme answers only in part, but they are simply curious, not insolent; and life is too short, even in slow-moving China, to worry oneself over such a trifle as that.

Here there is a petty official, designated a "fu-yeh" (sergeant) who is responsible to the "hsien" magistrate at Hata for the peace of the town, and keeps it with two men. He is an interesting young fellow, a native of Pakou, and a son of the house where eighteen months before, I had spent a sociable hour with the Commander-in-Chief, H. E. Ma Yü-k'ün. We soon strike up a friendship, and the young "fu-yeh" tells me a great tale of a place on the river named Hsiangshui, (Sounding Waters), one hundred miles further north, where the waters disappear from view in the midst of a high hill, travel underground through caves that no man has ever explored, and emerge only into the light again after a distance of from thirty to forty li. My spirits rise high at the story. A recent writer in the "Geographical Journal" has mentioned disappearing rivers in this very district, but no foreign traveller has ever seen them. And I have visions of getting on the track of one of Mother Nature's most singular phenomena, when I have compassed the hundred miles that lie between me and Hsiangshui. But I must not anticipate. The Sounding Waters will thunder in our ears by-and-bye.

The young "fu-yeh" also tells me that Prince Su, who is visiting for state purposes the Mongol banners in the Eastern Gobi, is expected to reach Hata on Monday, May 7. As we are to arrive there to-morrow, the 6th, there is a remote possibility of our seeing the honest Prince's arrival, and if the fates be propitious, of perhaps a chat with this

most progressive and clean-handed Manchu.

On the 6th therefore, Sunday though it be, we pack up our traps and are off by daylight. We go due West now, and at once have to climb some three hundred feet to the top of a wide table-land, which extends in a straight line before us for two miles. We see a few men preparing to plough the land, and are witnesses of a simple ceremony of which the Chinese accompanying me confess themselves ignorant, and now that it is not practised within the Great Wall. The three men are burning incense paper, and making the usual genuflexions on the ground, and have with them three fresh eggs which are to be broken and poured out on the land as a offering to the god of agriculture. I ask them the purport of their ceremony, but the only answer I can get is "toa ta liang shih" (that we may have greater crops). I remonstrate with them in a kindly way, and tell them of Him Who sendeth the rain alike upon the just and the unjust, and causeth the sun to shine upon both the evil and the good. One of the men, in a half-shamefaced manner, now asks me if I will not accept their eggs for myself, but I thank him as I decline, and leave them to their ploughing and their inarticulate praying, wondering much at the ramifications of Chinese superstition.

We pass within easy reach of the Yuenpaoshan, where coal has been hewn for many years, and I ride over on my pony to have a look at a primitive mine. The best building about the shafts is the idol-temple, which, I presume, if they could speak pidgin English, the miners would call "good joss." Where the men herd together—and there are said to be two hundred over miners here, is not nearly so clean and respectable. I hand my pony's reins to one of the men, while I go into the hut that covers the shaft. The men are going down the clumsy steps. It is a weird and eerie sight, in the semi-darkness of the hut, and the pitch blackness of the shaft, to see these humble miners going down to their work in the early morning with their oil lamps, and their queues curled up under their caps. I find myself in imagination back among the hardy colliers of my own Northumberland, where my early life was spent; for one does not notice almond eyes in faces begrimed with yesterday's coal-dust and sweat, and they have on them that peculiar smell of oil that clings about the miner's garments in all lands, which comes now to me as with the fragrance of a familiar friend. True, here there are neither driving wheels nor smooth-running cages; neither air-shafts nor endless chains: neither iron "tubs" nor wooden "bogies"; but it is difficult to realise that one is in an Eastern land, and possibly the first child of the West to look down that shaft and talk with those men. They tell me there are three hundred steps down to the bottom; that the shaft is two hundred feet deep; that a through current of air is maintained between the two shafts that have been opened a few hundred yards from each other; that there is no machinery of any kind whatever, and that everything is done by human labour; that when they meet water in any serious quantity, they at once abandon the working, but that if it is at all within their powers to cope with, they *carry* it to the surface in the leather

bags and dispose of it in that way. The entire hill, extending for some six or eight square li, is full of coal. The coal, of which I got a specimen, is not very good, however. It is of slaty nature. And since the mine itself is about two hundred miles from anywhere, it would never pay for the introd uction of more modern methods, even if the Government would grant a concession, which they would not. One good thing I learn is, they have never had a fatal accident. Their careful plan of working ensures them against falls of stone from the sides or roof; while the absence of "trucks" and "wagons" means that men are never caught in narrow alleyways and crushed or mangled to death. I "tip" the man who has been holding my pony, with a ten cent piece, and as I ride away from the mine, the men are divided in wonder at the bright appearance of the little coin they so rarely see here, and the matchless generosity of the foreigner who has paid so liberally for so simple a task.

Nearing another village named Machiatzu (we have been travelling over a succession of hills and valleys) we climb another hill some 600 feet high and find on top what appear to be an immense multitude of ancient graves. The same writer already mentioned as having in the "Geographical" Journal spoken of disappearing rivers in this district, has also spoken of an ancient civilisation in the Shat'okuo, and sight of these graves, on which we have come s suddenly and unexpectedly, rouses all my interest straight away, and I am on the scent like a terrier after a rat. Am I to discover one of these ancient buried cities? Is my trip already to justify itself, in point of interest and in the unearthing of old-world secrets! A passing traveller discourages the idea, and declares that these numerous mounds have just been thrown up by the wind, and are not graves at all. We pooh-pooh his statement, and one of my men, as eager as I myself, draws my attention to what he says are the minute remnants of decayed bones. And I—well, "the wish is father to the thought" - I *think* he is right.

We spend some time hunting round, but discover nothing more convincing, and hie our way to Machiatzu, and at once begin a searching cross-examination of the Shantung landlord in the inn. Alas, for the vanity of human hopes! "Are those not ancient graves on the top of that hill we have just crossed?" "Puh shih, tsiu shih fêng-hua ti." (No, they are simply blown up by the wind). "But how can the wind blow up such mounds, and so many of them? And how come they all to be of that particular shape?" "Ah," this with a tone of pity for my ignorance—"you don't know how the wind can blow here. This is the land of winds, and the winds, can do anything it fancies. When a wind blows there is so much sand about that it is a case of 'chien pu thi jen' (cannot see people)."

We are destined to make our firs acquaintance with the big winds of that district this very afternoon. The way to Hata has become very hot. Shu Feng, my cook, has fallen asleep on his mule, and is rudely awakened by tumbling to the ground, and looking round to see who has knocked him. Over the sand-heaps we go, but the city we seek we cannot yet see. Yuan Min has left his dark glasses at a village where he has stopped for a drink of water, and has to retrace his steps for some three miles. I send on the cook to find us a decent inn in the city. The

mules plod steadily on. Marisami, Wêng and I, glad of an excuse to rest, sit down by the wayside to wait for Yuan Min. While I wait, I note a cloud of a strange form appearing in the East behind us. Wêng suggests we had better move on. I look at my watch as the storm bursts upon us. It is just 2.10. We do not reach Hata till 3.30. And in that hour and twenty minutes it is a solemn fact that we see absolutely nothing but the cart-tracks along which we tramp, and which we simply dare not leave for a moment lest we lose our way. Oh, that wind! How it blows! And that sand! How it fills our nostrils and our ears, blinds our eyes and grits our teeth! Fortunately, it is on our backs, and we have just to keep pressing forward. There is no attempt at conversation. To open one's mouth would be to have it instantly filled with the sandy deposit of the Hata plain. We had looked for a city of which we had heard much and imagined more. We are thankful that we can see our boots and the cart-tracks that are now our only guides. And we enter the city of Hata in such a state as would have made it difficult for our own mothers to recognise us. And as we stumble up the main street, with our eyes still upon the ground, I see first the boots, then the putties, next the khaki suit of a foreigner, and then a second form in clean striped flannels, and the proverbial feather could have knocked me over with astonishment, as a cheery, strong voice, with an unmistakable American accent, says, "Are you Mr. Hedley?"

CH'IHFENGHSIEN, THE CITY OF THE CARNATION PEAKED MOUNTAIN.

The two men whom I thus meet so unexpectedly prove to be Messrs. Morley and Dore, the former an American, the latter a German. They had arrived in Hata the day before, and having passed through Pakou on their way north, had visited the missionaries there, and being informed of my presence in the locality, had been on the look-out for me. It is a delightful surprise to meet with men with whom one can speak in one's mother tongue, and it does not take me long to decide to seek quarters in the same inn at which they are staying. That proves to be the Kung Yuan Tien (Inn of Original Justice), a fine inn on the main street, and we are very soon settled down in a couple of clean and comfortable rooms in a quiet compound. My new-found friends prove to be exceedingly genial companions, and the short time we are enabled to spend together is like an oasis in the desert. And yet they are travelling on perhaps the saddest mission that could send two men out into such wilds, and perhaps this is the place where I should give some little account of them.

Mr. Morley, a bright young business man of twenty-five, from Michigan, U.S.A., has come all the way from home especially to gain information of his elder brother, Mr. Reuben H. Morley, who has been missing since Sept. 1905, having mysteriously disappeared while on a trip into the very regions in which we three have now met. It appears that in the summer of 1905, Mr. Dore, the German gentleman, had been staying at the Hotel du Nord in Peking, making preparations for a long trip from Peking to Harbin, going by way of Lamamiao, and the Mongolian desert, with stores intended for sale among the residents of that distant Russian outpost. At the same time, Mr. Reuben Morley was a guest at the hotel, and he, together with a Frenchman who gave his name as Le Verigeur, and described himself as a retired Captain of the French Army, struck up friendship with Mr. Dore, as men so readily do in these far Eastern regions. Morley, who seems to have been of a roving disposition, and eager to see for himself some of the lesser-known places of the earth, asked permission of Mr. Dore to join his caravan and to accompany him to Harbin. Le Verigeur preferred a similar request, and the good-natured Teuton readily agreed, thinking doubtless that the company of congenial comrades would relieve the monotony of the long march before him, and be a source of strength to his caravan. This being agreed on, Morley, the son of a wealthy home and well provided with funds, made all the necessary arrangements, secured his passport from the American Legation, and in August of last year,

the three started from Peking, with a caravan of camels, one hundred in all, heavily laden with stores, for the first stage of their long and slow tramp across the desert to Harbin.

The route lay through the district of Luanp'inghsien to Lamamiao, and Mr. Dore testifies to the feeling of good comradeship that prevailed amongst them. Before they reached Lamamiao, however, Morley discovered that he had been robbed of a considerable sum of money, as well as his passport, and suspected the landlord of an inn they had stayed at in some obscure corner of the Luanp'inghsien. At the same time, it was very remarkable (seen in the light of later events) that Le Verigeur, who so far had made no display of money, suddenly blossomed out into wealth, bought himself a capital pony, and otherwise indicated to his companion that he, too, possessed his share of the "ready." Mr. Dore, leaving the caravan under the command of Morley, now pushed on ahead to Lamamiao, to hire carts for the march across the desert, and so to save delay and possible extortion. Morley, chafing under the loss of his money, no sooner reached Lamamiao than he declared his intention of returning to Luanp'inghsien, and endeavouring to recover what he had lost, from the landlord he suspected of the robbery. Le Verigeur agreed to return with him, and getting a statement of the case drawn up in Chinese by some official at Lamamiao, the two men parted from Mr. Dore there, leaving him to his lonely trip across the plains, which, with his eighty-four carts, he accomplished safely in eighty-five days. From that time, Mr. Dore saw these men no more.

Arrived at Luanp'inghsien, Morley submitted his case to the Chinese official, who instantly sent off an officer in company with the two foreigners to demand restitution from the suspected landlord. They had ridden out from Luanp'inghsien a matter of forty li, when Le Verigeur declared that they were travelling too slowly, and said he would return to the city and await Morley there. Morley went on to the inn, and with the terrors of the law to back him, compelled the poor and probably-innocent landlord to disgorge what it is evident he had never stolen. Morley then rejoined Le Verigeur at Luanp'ing, from which place they travelled in company to Jehol. From there Le Verigeur made a hurried trip to Peking, but rejoined his friend after the lapse of less than two weeks. In the interval Morley lived quietly in an inn at Jehol, seeing the sights of that beautiful city and district, and enjoying some shooting among the adjacent hills. He informed the Legation in Peking by wire of the loss of his passport, and asked for a reissue by special messenger. But the authorities there for some reason declined to comply with his request, and instructed him by telegram to return at once to Peking. By this time Le Verigeur had returned from Peking to Jehol, and Morley replied to the Legation, refusing to obey their instructions, and informing them that he had resolved upon crossing Eastern Mongolia, in the hope of getting into Manchuria and seeing some of the fighting.

The two men were next seen together at a distant Roman Catholic Mission Settlement named Maoshantung, where, with the gracious hospitality characteristic of their class, the lonely French Fathers entertained them as guests. Maoshantung is some

500 li north-east of Jehol; 100 li west of Wut'anch'êng, while Wut'anch'êng is exactly 180 li north of Hata. They left Maoshantung together for Wut'anch'êng, and from that day to this, nothing has been seen or heard of concerning Reuben Morley by living man. In September, Le Verigeur suddenly turned up alone at Hata, and proceeded straightway to the Roman Catholic Mission in the East Suburb, where, representing himself as Vicomte Le Verigeur, he was entertained for two nights and one day by the hospitable priest in charge, Father van Somme. He had with him then a shot-gun which he informed Father van Somme he had bought from Morley, the latter having found himself short of funds for his projected trip through Mongolia. From Hata, Le Verigeur has been traced to Peking, where he stayed again at the Hotel du Nord, and represented to a common friend of Morley and himself, that in Mongolia Morley and he had a quarrel, in which the former had tried to shoot him, and that consequently he had parted from him there.

It was noticed in Peking that Le Verigeur, who had formerly been the very soul of good-nature, was at this time very morose, refusing to join in any hilarity or recreation, and studiously avoiding anything in the form of a camera. He borrowed money from the hotel manager to visit Tientsin, leaving his trunks in the hotel as a pledge. When they were eventually opened, they were found to contain nothing but bricks and rubbish. Le Verigeur was seen on the train between Peking and Tientsin by the friend named above. Since then, he too has disappeared into space, and all efforts to trace him have failed. But—and here the investigations of the gentlemen I met in Hata seem to gather in incriminating force on the shoulders of Le Verigeur—a few days after he journeyed to Tientsin a letter of credit was presented at the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank in Shanghai, and £160 sterling drawn in the name of Reuben H. Morley. Again, at Colombo, just allowing time for a man to reach that port from Shanghai, another amount, this time for £580, was drawn in the same way. The signatures in each case have been proved to be clever, but undoubted, forgeries. The French Military Authorities declare that they have never had a captain of the name of Le Verigeur in their Army. And everything seems to point to a treacherous tragedy in the wind-swept sand-deserts of far Mongolia. For while I was yet on my tramp, Messrs. Morley and Dore were reported to have returned from their tour with a Chinese boy who stated that Le Verigeur had first murdered and then robbed Morley. Particulars I do not know, and this is not the place to record them if I did, but one cannot help feeling the pathos of the whole affair. The bright, if somewhat restless and reckless young fellow who had served as a volunteer in Cuba and the Philippines during the Spanish-American war: who had lived alone in some of the wild places of the Philippine Islands, and made himself so prime a favourite among the wilder natives there, that on one occasion he, alone and unarmed, actully prevented an inter-tribal conflict, and reconciled men who had long indulged a bitter feud: who had come to China during the Boxer rising, with the interest of a rover who likes to see what is happening in the world: who had gone home

for a while, and then, the East once more a-calling, had returned to China hoping to get into Manchuria, to be eventually murdered by one who had posed as friend and companion, and be thrown aside as food for the wolves or for the sand to bury; how sad a close to a life that had but reached its thirtieth birthday. And there is another sad side to the picture. In far-off America, lives an old man of seventy-four who mourns his absent lad, and wonders why no news reaches him; whose heart is held in long and acute suspense, and who hopes even when hope is dead. And the energetic brother, who moved by his father's sorrow for the absentee, decides, no matter at what cost, to come across the world to seek the missing one where he is never likely to be found. Truly "fact is stranger than fiction," and sadder too, and one can scarcely imagine a more hopeless or more pathetic errand for brother to take, than had fallen to the lot of the genial young fellow it was my pleasure to meet in Hata.

The two days we spend together in the Kung Yuan Tien, are very welcome, I think, to us all. Away on the tramp it becomes at times so lonely that the sight of a Western face is as a tonic to the tired traveller. There is another sense in which you get accustomed to the lack of society with men of kindred race. The never-failing interest of a new and unknown country: the diversified experiences that each day brings to you as you tramp along: the freshness of a people with whom you have never before been in such close contact: the peaceful pastoral scenes of the Mongol plains: the varying and winding current of the river along whose banks you march: all these and much more that will readily occur to the active imagination, are daily and hourly at hand to relieve the traveller's loneliness, and prevent regretful longings for what has been voluntarily left behind for a season. But how delightful it is to hear from some one else the familiar English tongue; to chat with men whose interests roam over the world as your own do, and who are not "cribbed, cabined and confined" within the circular walls of a Mongol hut: who, moreover, can tell you something of what has been happening in the world during the short time you have been out of it. You only realise how you have been missing all these things when you have them again for a day or two. Such pleasure was mine as I talked with my new-found friends. It was here that I learned from Mr. Morley of the sad fate that has overtaken San Francisco, and that one item proved to be the only piece of news I had from the outside world until I reached Ch'ao-yang, and found letters awaiting me there.

The evening we reach Hata, we three dine by invitation with the genial priest of the Roman Catholic Mission, in the fine premises but recently erected in the East Suburb. Father van Somme is a tall, handsome Belgian of thirty-six years of age, who has been in China nine years, and who, like all Roman Catholic missionaries, expects to live and die in the land of his adoption. He evidences his delight at our presence by a capital meal prepared in foreign style, and after the privations of the road, we vote it a meal fit for the gods. We form an interesting quartette in that remote mission house, being Belgian, American, German and British

There is no flagging of conversation either at the meal or after it, for though we are but four men, we of necessity must have recourse to three languages to make ourselves understood. Thus van Somme and Dore talk in French: Morley and I, of course, in English: and while Chinese is the channel of intercourse between our olngb-earded and long-gowned host and myself, Mr. Morley, speaking neither French nor Chinese, and Father van Somme speaking no English, they two must needs converse through interpreters. It is a delightful evening, nevertheless, and all too soon ended. Father van Somme assures us it is a red-letter day to him, for never before has he had three foreign visitors at one time. And we, equally pleased and very grateful for the generous hospitality of a man, educated and cultured, who lives so far away from the centre of things in which he is keenly interested, part from him with many sincere expressions of esteem. As a Protestant missionary, it is a matter of particular pleasure for me to testify to the unquestioned piety, the self-sacrificing zeal, the cheerful contentment, and the unwearying diligence of such men as Father van Somme, though he could not understand my preference for cold water or Chinese tea, when there were both claret and cognac on the table, and marvelled much that his fragrant Havanas did not tempt me.

Monday morning, May 7, brings the luxury of a hot bath and a change of underclothing, and later on, a visit to we three foreigners from the official of Ch'ihfênghsien. This man is interesting not so much on his own account as on that of a more famous brother. His name is Li Ping-ho, and his brother's name was Li Ping-hêng, Governor of Shantung when the Germans took Kiaochou. It was at the German demand that he was then cashiered for his inability to prevent the murder of the two German Roman Catholic missionaries, which was made the occasion for the occupancy of that territory. Li Ping-hêng had—and deservedly so—the reputation of being one of the most rabidly anti-foreign of all China's high officials, and the loss of his post in such circumstances in 1897 was not calculated to make him love us more. Hence he flung himself with reckless ardour into the foolish and wicked Boxer rising, marched at the head of a considerable force of soldiers to resist the advance of the Peking Relief Force, where, chagrined with defeat at Yangts'un, he committed suicide rather than fall into the hands of the hated foreigner.

His brother, the hsien official at Hata, is a thin, delicate, deformed man of sixty-one. He carries in his face the marks of a confirmed opium-smoker, but he is an exceedingly pleasant and mild-mannered old fellow, who claims acquaintance with me since we have once exchanged cards, though never met, when I passed through Pakou, during his tenancy of that important post. Though an opium-smoker and a man of delicate health, he has a good reputation for clean-handedness in his district, and whatever his more famous brother may have been, it is impossible to imagine that this man could ever be anything but the genial and affable old gentleman he is proving himself to be in our company. But in judgments of the Chinese and especially of the officials one meets only now and again, nothing is so

certain as the uncertainty of how they really regard the questions that gather round the foreigner, so I content myself with saying that Mr. Li Ping-ho is very nice on this one occasion of my meeting with him.

He is very naturally interested in my visit to his distant territory, and by him, for the first time in all my Chinese travelling, I am asked for my passport. The attempt at innocent inquiry is but ill-disguised by the negative form in which he puts it: "I suppose you have not brought a passport with you?" seems to suggest that if I had not, I might have shared the fate of the Japanese I heard of at T'atzukou and be politely requested to go back to where I came from. The old gentleman is very astute also, when I remark as I hand him my passport, that probably he has already been officially apprised of my coming from Tientsin. It is amusing how little a Chinese official will admit to a foreigner, and to what subterfuges he will resort to be saved from saying too much. "Yes, probably I have," is his reply now, "I will look it up when I go back to the Yamên." And then he asks if I will permit him to take my passport to the Yamên, to look it over, which permission is readily granted on condition that he returns it at once, "for remember, I never stir one foot in China without it."

We have a very interesting chat with the old official after this. He dolefully replies to my question respecting his family, that he has had seven sons, all of whom are dead save one, and he is a confirmed invalid. It is not a question one can ask just now, but I wonder how far his and their manner of life is responsible for such a mortality. He is very anxious to know if I can prognosticate fortunes from faces, and when I playfully suggest that he is destined to become a Governor of a province, if not a high official of State in Peking, he shows that his anxiety is real and not jocular by turning from me to Mr. Dore, and asking him to divine what is in store for him in days, to come.

I ask him about the projected visit of Prince Su, and am assured that the date of the Prince's arrival is as yet uncertain. He is still at the Palace of the Haraschin Prince some two hundred li away. The thing that seems to have impressed the official most is that His Highness has required for the transport of himself and staff no fewer than twenty baggage and forty passenger carts, to say nothing of chair bearers, etc. Mr. Li is at a loss to know the intention of the Prince's mission, and asks me if I can enlighten him at all. I suggest that the Prince will probably stay in Hata about a fortnight, but am met with the ready retort that in that case Mr. Li will be "huai liao" (financially ruined). "Two or three days will be as much as we can stand here. A fortnight would finish us up altogether." So that the old gentleman hopes, that in a very real sense, he may speed the parting guest," and the sooner the better. Like a wise man, of course, he has no criticism to make on Prince Su himself, whom he highly extols as one of the ablest and most upright of the Imperial advisers, but there is reason in his fears as to finances, when it is remembered how a great man in China is always attended by a greater cavalcade of followers, whose ideals as to public duty are not so high, nor their practises with respect to acceptance of

money presents not so straight and honest as those of the man they follow. And even Prince Su himself cannot undertake that there shall be no secret extortion, as he passes from place to place.

We have our cameras out before the kindly old official leaves us and get snaps of him both alone and in company with ourselves. He assures Messrs. Morley and Dore that an escort is being provided for them on their journey north; much to my regret, presses a similar offer on me in my saunter north-east, and then departs to his yamên in his cart, and we find ourselves saying, that he is really a very decent old fellow after all.

After Messrs. Morley and Dore start off for Wut'anchng, I have my opportunity of seeing the sights of the big city. Chihfêng, as I have said, means the City of the Carnation Peaked Mountain (or more simply, the city of the Red Hill). Its name is derived from a flesh-coloured hill that stands some twelve li east of the city. The Mongols call it Wulanhata, which means exactly the same thing, and is much more commonly used Hata, from the spectacular point of view, is distinctly disappointing. It is, indeed, the least interesting of all the central places of business outside the Great Wall. There are no particular pictures of architecture, the best of all being the Mohamedan mosque, an ornate structure that is mentioned by Abbé Huc as having caused great conflict when built over sixty years ago, principally because it towers high above everything else in the city. Next to it is the temple of the god of war, but to find that you have to go into a side street remote from the main thoroughfares, while the Confucian temple is a very ordinary-looking structure hidden away in the south-eastern corner of the city.

In the city itself there are shops and stores and shops, and practically nothing else. Yes, I forget, there is something else, something of which you become conscious through your nose the moment you enter the place. For Hata rejoices (save the mark) in a gutter about five feet wide that runs from end to end of the three principal streets, into which, judging by the odour it emits, all the refuse and filth of the city is thrown. Stagnant, fetid water stands with its thick coating of green, waiting to salute your olfactory nerves, and I find myself thanking my lucky stars that send me here in early May and not in late July.

The principal thing then about Hata is its shops. Hata is said to have "lu t'angchieh" (six streets), but as a matter of fact there are only three running east and west. The other three are simply the back lanes of the main streets, in which there is next to no business done. But in the main streets themselves there is every appearance of prosperous business. The buildings are not nearly so good nor so pleasing to see as those at T'aizukou. Nothing at Hata is for show: everything is for profit. Beauty "puh suan" (does not count): Utility is all-important. And though the width of the streets—ranging from twenty to forty feet—prevents any appearance of crush or bustle, yet there are never lacking a considerable number of pedestrians, mounted men and people in carts who indicate that many are "making haste to be rich."

Naturally, in a region so comparatively near to where China's finest ponies are reared, sleek, well-fed animals are the common rule. The villager

who has come in to market—be he Mongol or Chinese—is as likely as not mounted on a sturdy steed that would fetch a good price in Shanghai or Tientsin. As one of my men said to me one day:—"Tsai chê-erh muh-in ka-ku ma" (Here there are no poor horses). And contrary to usage and good manners within the Great Wall, here there is no descent from the pony in passing through the street. Nor is there any slackening of pace, as one might naturally expect in a busy thoroughfare. They rush along as though they are on a grass course, at a trotting match or at a race, the latter for preference. You must look out for yourself, when you go out on the street, for as likely as not in a walk of ten minutes, you will meet as many plump Chinese or wild-looking Mongols, intent on nothing but their own business, and getting over the ground on horseback as quickly as they can.

Hata is the largest of the cities in what, for convenience, we may cal Inner Mongolia, larger even than either Pakou or Jehol. It is also by far the largest trade-mart the principal trade being done in live stock, animal skins, wheat and other cereals. How many business houses there are I cannot certainly say. The Chinese are accustomed to speak in round numbers, and as likely as not will offer you when you ask for figures, the beautifully-elastic and indefinite phrase, "to, to," (Many, many). I tried several times to learn how many shops there were, but could get nothing more satisfactory than that there were considerably over one thousand. Probably 1,400 or 1,500 would fit the facts. The population is correspondingly large, but I am struck with the comparatively small number of women we see on the streets. There is not one woman to 100 men, suggesting to me that the city is purely a business centre. The official, however, informs me that the residences of the people are all in the "hut'ung" (alleyways) that run in and out like rabbit burrows in all parts of the town, and as these quarters are not included in my peregrinations, it follows that I see but few of the tender sex.

One blessed thing about Hata from the foreigner's point of view is that the people do not bother you with their curiosity and inquisitiveness. You may walk about the town at your pleasure and neither a man nor a child will follow you round. Everybody seems too busy to worry about you, and consequently you do not worry about them. Only when you produce your tripod camera and attempt to set it up in the streets, will you get a few curious sightseers turning up from you know not where, and disappearing you know not whither when you have moved away. At all other times, my experience is that people take no more than a passing interest in you, and you are as secure from being followed as you are on the Bund at Shanghai.

Here also as everywhere else trade is entirely in the hands of Chinese from within the Wall. Not a Mongol house of business is there, among all the multitude of shops: not a Mongol assistant, young or old, among the still greater multitudes of men, that, in the expressive Chinese phrase, is used to descrive business men, "chu ti-fang" (live at a place). The reason for this arises not only from the natural simplicity of the Mongol and his consequent incapability for business, but from the interdiction of their Princes, who with an energy worthy of a better

cause, absolutely prohibit their people from personally entering into trade that means bookkeeping and the use of the "suan-pan" (abacus).

One of the delightful features of Hata streets is the multitude of "pehling" (larks) that hang at the doors of the stores in the sunlight and whistle the livelong day. Some of these beautiful birds warble as though they would burst their throats, and never have I been in any place where they are found in such profusion. And here is something to make the mouths of bird-fanciers water. In the districts immediately surrounding Hata, particularly in the north towards Wut'anch'êng, these sweet singers are as common as sparrows, and may be bought in any quantity for prices ranging from ten to twenty-five cents. And in Tientsin the same bird is foisted off upon the long-suffering and much-squeezed foreign innocent for $5 and $10. What sensible Chinaman would want to drive foreigners out of the country so long as that can be done? Does some enterprising friend, with the bump of acquisitiveness largely developed, ask why I did not purchase a cartload? Ah, I had an unknown and unproved country still to travel through, and one soon learns the unwisdom of loading yourself up with an overplus of baggage. And strong though the temptation was, (and I admit it was faced), it had to be put away.

An interesting experience of my stay in Hata was my visit to the official residence of the Mongol Prince of the Banner of W êngniut'ê, and my half-day's intercourse with several members of his family. The Prince (it would be flattering to one's vanity, though not quite correct, to imitate old Abbé Huc, and call him the King), was himself not at home, having also gone to meet Prince Su at the Palace of the Haraschin Prince. But his two younger brothers are in residence in the city, and have no sooner received my card of courtesy, than they send across asking me to dine with them the following morning at ten o'clock. I hope I may have credit for due modesty, and a sense of the fitness of things, when I say that I have the grace to decline the invitation. For one thing, a tramp is not always prepared for full-dress ceremonies and "high society;" and for another and more important reason in this case, I much prefer to spend as much time as I can spare with the two foreign friends that I have so unexpectedly met. The two young Princes are good enough to express their disappointment, but request that, if convenient, I might at least go across and have a chat with them. This I am very glad to do, and on the day after Messrs. Morley and Dore have left, I have the pleasure of a full morning's visit in the residence of the Prince.

May I here explain what I mean by the phrase "card of courtesy" used above? I do this because many of my fellow-foreigners are not conversant with the custom, and are consequently often regarded as barbarians, who do not know the most elementary rules of good breeding. The Chinese proverb has it:—"Hsing k'eh pai tsô k'eh". (The travelling guest pays his respects to the sitting one.) That is, it is an absolute necessity that the man who is passing through any town should take the first steps socially. Many foreign travellers aver that the Chinese ceremoniousness is an intolerable nuisance, and that all such business involves a sinful waste of time. Hence they systematically decline to have anything to do with Chinese officials of any kind, and come and go through city and town without

so much as a "by-your-leave," or a "how-do-you-do." But for what I suggest, a formal visit is not necessary. It only requires that your boy should take your card to the gentleman concerned; explain who you are and where from; state that your time in limited and your duties many; but that your card is sent to "ch'ing an, ch'ing an" (wish peace). That is all. Like an air cushion, there is nothing in it. But it does ease the joints, and it is one of those simple acts of courtesy that in China indicates the gentleman, and all foreigners who know China know what that means. The next step is taken by the man to whom the card has been sent. He will either return his card to you in similar manner: or he will call personally to see you: (In that case you are not bound to see him. A courteous "pu kan-tang, tang Chia"—I am not worthy, I stop your chariot—will suffice): or he will send you a formal invitation to sit at his mean board and take "pot-luck" with him.

When I reach the Prince's residence, I am at once ushered into the inner compound with all due ceremony, and met outside a side room by a bright and most intelligent young fellow of 36. This is the third brother of the Prince of Wêngniut'ê. He speaks beautiful Chinese in the Peking dialect: is a man of wide-awake and enquiring mind: simple in manners and unaffected in speech: and strives to make his foreign guest feel perfectly at home. The room in which we are seated is one of the cleanest and tidiest I have ever seen in China. The woodwork is largely composed of that fine and delicate carving for which even country Chinese carpenters are famed. The wall and ceiling have been but newly papered. The floors are cleanly swept, and altogether there is an air of refinement and order about the place that is all too rare in this land. And what is true of the place seems true of the people. How often in visiting a Chinese official, the blatant tones and the loud guffaws grate upon the nerves. Here the host speaks in quiet and cultured manner, and the servants,—all slaves, and of-course listening to all that is said,—take their cue from their master, and their demeanour leaves nothing to be desired. I have long thought that the Mongols are a gentler people than the Chinese, and nothing I see here tends to alter my opinion. There is no show of superiority; no attempt to overtalk or overawe the foreigner; and one feels that there are qualities in the simple-hearted Mongols, a few of which would not harm the astute Chinese. The only thing that does not please me, is the opium-pipe with its apparatus on the wooden bed. And I feel sorry as our gentlemanly host admits that he indulges twice a day, and that the use of the drug is almost as common among Mongols as among Chinese.

The young Prince is as ignorant of the purport of Prince Su's visit as the hsien official was. What does it all mean? There has never been such a mission from the Court before. Can I enlighten them concerning it? Rumours have come that the land of Mongolia is to be split up into different portions for different countries. Russia will have this, Japan wants that; and, of course, the other honourable countries will not be above taking their share. Is all this true? And are there to be railways built? And mines opened? And is my visit in any way connected with that of Prince Su? And am I not an agent of my government? The old

question that I have been asked a thousand times while I have been in China, and which now for the one thousand and first time, I am glad to answer in the negative. I am able to assure my host that Prince Su's mission is not to split up, but to amalgamate, Mongolia; not to make her weak through division, but to make her strong through consolidation; not to allow Russia nor Japan, nor any other country to slip in and appropriate the fair lands in which their herds and flocks graze, but so to organise and unite the various banners that they will be able to say, "Hands off! Mongolia for the Mongols!"

"But will not all that mean levies, cash and a hundred other things that at present we do not have?" "Yes, it may do, probably will. Most important of all, it will mean education, enlightenment, the advance of knowledge, the retreat of superstition. Perhaps some day, the acceptance of Christian teaching, if not of the Christian faith. In fact, a general stirring of Mongolia's millions; a revivifying of forces long dead." "The old order changeth, giving place to new," and even in remote Mongolia, where the wind sweeps o'er the trackless wastes; where the wild beasts lurk, and the traveller traces his track by the stars, will a voice be heard, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and" (my heart adds) "Christ shall give thee light." So our conversation takes a serious turn, and this young scion of a Princely house shakes his head dubiously and murmurs with a sigh "Chiu p'a pan pu liao" (I am just afraid it cannot be done).

Among the members of the family whom I meet is an old Lama, sixty years of age, with the most kindly and benevolent face I saw in all Mongolia. He is clothed in rich, yellow silk garments, clean as a new pin. His cheeks shine as if touched with rouge, and when he smiles, he looks what the ladies would call "lovable." I learn that he is really the head of the Prince's family: not himself the Prince, but above him: that he lives as the Abbot of a large temple near the ancestral palace some forty miles to the north-west: and that he has a far-famed reputation as a physician. The old gentleman cannot speak Chinese, but he looks on me much as a child might look on a new toy, and displays a childlike interest in all I say and do. I am more than ordinarily delighted when he asks if I will take his photo. To make sure of him, I take two. Both are good, but the bright smile is lacking in the picture, and my lord the Abbot does not do himself justice.

The little son of the reigning Prince, a boy of eleven years of age, also requests that I might photograph him. Poor little chap. One wonders what there is in store for him in future years. And I cannot help wishing that it might be possible to give him a first-class modern education, to rid him of some of the more potent superstitions that fill his country, and so fit him for the onerous duties that will be his when his father shall have "shuffled off this mortal coil."

The Princess is at home and sends a message to say she hopes I will photograph her little son. Not only am I ready to do that, but I send in my turn, a courteous message, wishing her peace, and asking if I may not also have the privilege of photographing her little son's mother. The answer is that she cannot just now appear

STREET SCENE IN HABA.

SON AND HEIR TO PRINE OF WÊNGNIUT'Ê, HATA.

SCENE AT NATIVE COAL MINE, TIENG YUAN PAO SHAN.

RUINED HOUSE OF MURDERER OF AO HAN,
PRINCE AT LAOFU.

before me. She has just risen from her bed (lazy lady), and is busy with her morning meal, and therefore not prepared to receive guests. So evidently in Mongolia as in the fair lands of the West, it is not the thing to visit ladies in the forenoon. There is a pretty slave-girl who passes to and from the Princess' room, with her food and empty dishes. I would like a "snap" at her, but she is too busy to do more than steal sly glances as she goes on her lady's behests, and actually, I have not the courage to ask her to stand still for a moment. But I do the next best thing. If I cannot have the beautiful bird, at least I will have the pretty cage. So I photogr aph the main room in the compound, from which the Princess, if I could only see her, is probably peeping out at me. And a very pretty picture it makes.

Further along the same street I come upon the temporary residence fitted up for the reception of Prince Su. This is in the school premises of the city, and the finery outside looks very flat and tawdry. The space before the doors has been roped off, and passers-by are required to cross to the other side of the road. I wonder as I pass how His Highness will like the elongated cesspool at his door, and whether his mission includes the regulation of sanitary matters in Hata. But then again I remember that Prince Su comes from Peking, the city of nauseating smells. So Hata may keep its effluvia even yet. Poor Hata!

Near where Prince Su is to be housed, as on other of the principal streets, are what look at first like wooden pagodas, or miniature Eiffel Towers. I learn that they are simply the stock-in-trade of local cart-wrights, who, in place of packing their axle-trees on the ground, pile them up, pyramid-like, in the streets of the town.

Mention of the school premises reminds me of the schools themselves. Not that much can be said about them, for the simple reason that in Hata they can scarcely be said to exist. On the official's own confession, there are not more than twenty students in the elementary school, and that comprises the whole of the modern educational enterprises. If I were asked the reason of that I should say, Business! Business!! Business!!! It may seem strange to charge on business the responsibility for lack of initiative in educational matters. Not when you know Hata. The business men are all from a distance. None of them are natives of the place, it being contrary to China's business methods for men in business to have their families living with them. That means a scarcity of likely boys in the city itself. While so far as the peasantry of the district is concerned, the probability is that the percentage of the illiterate is higher here than in any other territory of equal size. And so poor Mr. Li, when I ask him about his schools, dolefully replies, "Hai ya, Hai Mu Shih, pu yung yi"! (Ah, Pastor Hedley, it is not easy!).

The remainder of my second day in Hata I spend in developing films and printing pictures for the Princes who have entertained me in the morning. Just about dusk, the third brother comes in his cart to visit me, and to receive the photos I have managed to prepare. All day long I have heard the men in the compound, measuring out corn for dispatch to places further south, and I have listened to their peculiar sing-song as they have drawled out the quantities. Five or

six carts come in, each with seven magnificent mules, t take away the grain in the early morning. The lovely lark that has hung outside my door throughout the day has ceased his singing, and his imitation of cat-calls, and closed his eyes in sleep. Now all is quiet. And we too, must sleep, for to-morrow as the dawn comes we must be off into the unknown, that is to lead us to the Shira-Muren and K'ulukou.

But one thing more I must tell. I am just in my first sweet slumber when my servant comes to tell me a piece of most unusual news. The innkeeper of the inn refuses to accept any payment for the rooms we have occupied during our stay. Unprecedented experience! So I order Shu Feng to give the servants an extra gratuity, and here I give the Inn of Original Justice a free advertisement. When you visit Hata, be sure you put up in the Kung Yuen Tien.

HATA TO HSIAOHOYEN. OUR BRIGAND SCARE.

I awake on the morning of Wednesday, May 9, at 3.30, to hear the rain falling so heavily that a start just then is out of the question. We all lie down again, therefore, for a longer rest, and for myself I must admit I am not sorry to have an extra three hours. At 6.30 when we do rise, it has ceased raining, but is dull and cold and remains so throughout the whole of the day. The official has fulfilled his unsolicited promise of an escort, and though it goes sorely against the grain for me to attach to my company a couple of men who are not ornamental, and not likely to be useful, there seems nothing to be done but to acquiesce in his Honour's wish. The two men we are favoured with seem to be steady, decent-like fellows. They are both well mounted, and each carries a rifle, the lock of which, however, as is usual in China, they have covered up in red calico. We bid farewell to Hata at 8 o'clock, leaving by the east gate, through which we had entered the city, but diverting North-east as soon as we get clear of the street, and meeting, when we have gone a few li, the small stream known as the Shihlakaho. This is the stream on which Hata may be said to stand, flowing as it does from the west, and passing the west and north gates of the city. The same stream has been wrongly named by some geographers the Yingch'ingho. Whatever may be found west of Hata, it is certain that there is no Yingch'ingho near that city itself: nor is any such name known to the residents in the district. About 100 li north of Hata, there is a narrow stream known as the Yangch'ingho, which may be the stream intended, but it is not found in any close relation to Hata. At Pulihuoshao, near where this stream flows into Laoho, sixty miles north-east of Hata, its bed is no more than from sixty to eighty feet wide. It is only correct then to say that Hata stands on neither the Yingch'ingho (which is non-existent); nor on the Yangch'angho, (which is over thirty miles away at its nearest point); but on the Shihlakaho(什拉戛河), which is evidently a Chinese transliteration of a Mongol name, and appears on the new German map as the Sirchaho.

We cross this river at a village named Paoch'ai gyingtze, where we find it much deeper than anything we have so far seen. After fording the river, we have to cross a crazy-looking bridge which stretches over what proves to be an ingenious irrigation canal, diverted from the main stream of the river, and enclosed within high embankments. There are openings at intervals through which the water is conducted at will to the fields, and especially to the wheat-plots. It is quite a unique arrangement, being fully thirty feet above the actual bed of the river, but requiring the constant attention of the villagers, lest it burst its banks, and run again to seek the stream from which it has been diverted. The water flows fully ten feet deep, and is carried along in a swift current.

Travelling along by the side of this miniature canal, we meet with a caravan of Mongols, all, save one gentleman, mounted on shaggy ponies. He is evidently the master of the company, and is seated cross-legged in an ordinary Chinese carr, having spasmodic whiffs at the water-pipe he holds in his hand. He is a dissipated, blear-eyed looking man of forty-five or fifty, but gives us a friendly salute as we ride past, and calls out to ask where we are going. We learn that he is a representatives of the Ao Han Banner, on his way to Hata to join in the reception to Prince Su

We have our midday meal at a dirty village named Pachia, and an uneventful march in the afternoon to Yuanmaolung, sixty-five li from Hata. We find quarters here in an inn so small that my party occupies all the available space, and learn that twenty li south across the river is the walled town of Chienchʻengying, where we stayed on Saturday last; and that four li north of us is the residence of a Mongol Duke, at a place called Shaokuoti. (Distillery Land).

Thursday, May 10, proves to be one of the most interesting, and in its latter part, quite the most exciting day, of our trip. Emerging from the little inn at Yuanmaolung at 5.10 a.m, we take a bearing to a high hill that proves eventually to be forty li away in an almost straight line. The road lies over a vast, sandy plain, in which there are found only two hamlets in a march of eleven miles, with a few stunted willows that appear half-ashamed of their existence. We have been going about an hour when one of our escort espies a couple of small red deer some distance ahead of us. It appears that they haunt these sandy plains, being only occasionally disturbed by the natives in the winter-time. So far we have carried our shot-gun on one of the mules, and not fired a single shot. It is not likely that we can get near enough to these deer to do them any harm with a shot-gun. But the sportsman's instinct asserts itself even in a missionary at times, and I get out my gun, and proceed to crawl along over the ground towards what we now make out to be four deer. Unfortunately there is practically no cover, and progress is slow. Then the deer catch sight of my mu'es and men marching steadily along the road and somewhat alarmed, begin to move slowly away from us. I quicken my pace, but only succeed in startling them still more, and fearing they are about to get quite beyond range altogether, I get up and fire two shots at them. Wasted, of course! I might have known they would be!

But they run away no more than a matter of four hundred yards, and then stop again to gaze round to where the shots have come from. There is still less cover now, and realizing that to follow them would be useless I hasten on after the caravan. Another mile or two, and I make out seven more. This time, with the assistance of the two soldiers, I try stalking them, but one of the men bungled, and after a plucky attempt by the other man to drive them in my direction, they flee away towards the east and we see them no more. There is plenty of good sport here, however, for an experienced "gun," for until they are thoroughly frightened, the deer run from you but a little distance. The Chinese get them as they get ducks. They dig a hole in the ground, bank it up with sods all round, leaving a few rifle-holes only, and then they will lie round all day, wait for the unsuspecting animals that thus fall an easy prey to the "sportsman." But an Englishman is not a Chinese, and to

lie in a ditch all day is not quite the Western idea of sport. Yet as these deer are found within only twenty miles of Hata, it would seem that enthusiastic sportsmen might do worse than write this district down as worth a visit.

As there is no inn whatever between Yuanmaolung, and Halamut'ou, it becomes necessary for us to go and have our midday meal at a small coal-mine we have to pass on the way. This is called the Tungyuanpaoshan (The Eastern Hill of Original Treasures). The mine of which I spoke in my previous article is distinguished from this by being called the Western Hill. To reach the mine proper involves a climb of some 400 feet up the side of the hill. At the top we find a decent and quiet room in the overseer's quarters, where we have our meal in peace and comfort. There are several openings in the hill that may be called shafts, and from which coal is worked. The rule is that each company shall have two shafts, so securing a through draught of air, and each pays annually to the official at Ch'ihfenghsien, the sum of Tls. 180 as tax. At the Western Hill, where the works are much more extensive, and the quantity of coal produced is much greater, the yearly tribute demanded by his Honour is no less than Tls. 2,240. With the collection of these taxes the responsibility of the Chinese official begins and ends. There are no deputies appointed by him to superintend the work: no anxiety as to whether workings prove worthless or lucrative. All he does is to require that every year the sums named above are paid over to him. If the managers make more profits so much the better for them if less, so much the worse. The official, Gallio-like, "cares for none of these things."

It will be easily understood that these taxes are not popular with the people who work these primitive mines. I am told that coal has been obtained from these hills ever since the time of Ch'ien Lung, but these taxes have only been imposed since the organization of the Board of Commerce at Peking. It is not to be wondered at then, that the mine-managers fail to see the advantages of "pien-fa" (reform) which manifests itself to them in a mere collection of dues arbitrarily imposed.

The coal at the Tungyuanpaoshan is of even poorer quality than that at the Western Hill, and finds but a very limited sale. The Shihlakaho puts a natural barrier in the way of its being sold at Hata, which town purchases its supplies entirely from the more adjacent mine across the river. The Laoho prohibits large sales on the north-east side, so that for sales, the mine is dependent on the villages within a comparatively small radius. Our friend the overseer, therefore, will not admit that he is engaged in building up a fortune out of the treasures of the earth. "What can be done with twenty men? with poor coal, and restricted sales? How is it possible that we should "fa-ts'ai" (become wealthy)? are his very natural questions.

When we have had a rest and our simple meal, I ask permission to descend the mine to "look-see." Never before has so favourable an opportunity been given me of seeing down a Chinese mine, and the comparison with my recollections of old days in the homeland will be interesting. Marisami, my Indian companion, in response to my invitation, also expresses his willingness to go. But our Chinese assistants will have none of it. "Hsia

na ko k'an shen-mo?" (What is there to go down there for? is their philosophic query.) So the trip is undertaken by Marisami and myself, escorted by the manager of the mine. Arrived at the shaft, round which are a few ox-carts waiting to be supplied with coals, we are each provided with a lamp. We have to wait a few minutes to allow a couple of men to come up with coals. Each man carries three baskets full of coal, one before and two behind him. How they can manage to toil up those crazy steps with such loads passes my comprehension, and one "thanks the goodness and the grace" that has not made me a humble coolie at the Eastern Hill of Original Treasures. I turn to the manager and explain to him how easy it would be to rig up an endless rope, which could be turned by a couple of men at a windlass, much as is done in deep wells, and so save all this inhuman expenditure of human strength. The only answer I get, to my exhortation to "hsiang kêo fa-tzu (think out a plan), is "hsiang pu ch'i" (cannot be done). He either will not or cannot see that the saving of time alone would save money, and so they will continue "as it has been in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be," bringing up every ounce of coal in this appalling way.

We have no sooner begun our descent of the steps, I following close in behind the manager, than I discover that poor Marisami is woefully nervous. He trembles so that he can scarcely hold his lamp in his hand, and after a few steps, begins in a manner to crawl down, sitting first on each step, grasping the slippery poles which form the steps with both hands, and so "letting himself down gently." Alarmed lest he should slip in his nervousness, and damage both himself and us in front of him by a too rapid descent into the darkness, I turn and suggest to him that if he does not like it, he should return to the surface. That is the needed tonic. To suggest that he is afraid is sufficient to make him more than ever determined to see the thing through, and unhesitatingly he assures me that all is well, and that he intends to go all the way. One of the men at the bank follows him and takes charge of his lamp, and his two hands being thus quite free, he gets along much better, and reaches the bottom in safety. Poor Marisami! It is an altogether new experience to him, and there is, after all, something very weird and unnerving in the first descent "down in the coal mine. underneath the ground," especially when that descent has to be made on thin poles, worn smooth and bright by constant traffic.

Arrived at the bottom, we find ourselves in a narrow alleyway two feet broad and not more than four feet high, along which we slowly make our way in a stooping posture. The way is exceedingly well propped, there being strong posts on either side, at the most three feet apart, and many of them still closer We reach one place where the roof is so low that I can only manage to crawl through on my hands and knees. The Orientals, who seem to have the acrobatic faculty of tying themselves up into knots, manage to pass this spot with comparative ease. We see absolutely no water in the mine, nor any signs of it, and here as at the Western Hill, the custom is to immediately abandon the work at first sign of water in any great quantity. The air is wonderfully fresh

and pure, considering that we are underground, the current between the two shafts being both easy and regular. We visit three workings, but find not a single man in the mine. They have all gone to the bank for their food. It is instructive to note that the "face" and the manner of working the coal seems practically identical with what I remember of the home-mines, and that the greatest care is exercised in the propping of the roof. I quite forget while there to ask whether any blasting is done or not, but I saw no appearance of any. We return to the light by the second shaft, having completed our round, including two short rests, in thirty minutes. Coming up, I count the steps, and find I have let myself in for a task that is more difficult than I would have thought. All your spare breath is needed for the exertion of climbing, and I, at least, have but little to spare for counting. But I make the number 200 in all. The overseer contends that there are 240. But whether 200 or 240, my conclusion is, that to explore a mine it is much easier, if more dangerous, to have the advantage of modern machinery. Ascent and descent are much smoother and simpler processes in an easy-running cage, than when you are compelled to use up so much of your own strength over them.

Returning to the manager's room, and getting our dirty hands washed, I make myself immortal in that place by presenting him with a bright new Hongkong dollar, which I suggest should be expended in a little "ch'a-yeh" (tea-leaves) for the men. He puts it on one side, saying he would rather keep it as "pao-pei" (precious thing), as they never see these pretty things in those parts. Fancy! Immortality for a dollar! It could not be much more cheaply bought!

It is after we leave the coal-mine and its simple manager that we meet with the most exciting episode of our trip. We leave the hill at 11.45, descend by the way we had gone up, and join once more the road along which we had travelled during the morning, making direct for the bank of the Laoho. Here again we are to resume our survey of the river, Chienchêngying lies away to the west across the Shihlakaho. We reach the small Mongol village of Chuangt'ouying-tze, and while waiting there for the mules to come up, are joined by two mounted soldiers from Chiench'engying They are going with a message from their camp to another camp about one hundred li further north, and after a few minutes' chat with our escort and ourselves, they go on ahead of us along the road we to must follow. We have then done that day exactly forty-three li, and taking the new bearing that is rendered necessary by the turn in the road, we go forward, intending to stop for the night at the only village which boasts an inn, Halamut'ou.

We trudge along the bank of the river, and when only a few li from the village, I send our younger soldier on in front to get rooms bespoken for us at the inn. We follow quietly and unsuspiciously. We have already reached the southern section of Halamut'ou, and are only three li (one mile) from the inn. I take a drink from my water-flask, and find the water so insipid that I pour it out on the ground, comfortable in the thought that within twenty minutes we shall be settled for the day. What happens after that teaches me never again to part with water, however insipid, till we are actually where fresh supplies can be obtained. Through the trees in front of us, we suddenly see the two soldiers who had gone ahead with their

message, and now accompanied by our younger soldier, riding back at a tolerably quick pace. I turn questioningly to the soldier alongside of me, to hear him say, "There must be some serious reason for this." In great consternation, the three soldiers now join us, and say that further progress is impossible. There are forty bandits in the inn at Halamut'ou, having crossed the river from the southern side, and for us to go there would simply be to walk into a trap with our eyes open, would mean the loss of our arms and animals, if not worse. They advise an instant retreat, and thinking they mean to the village we have just passed through, I turn back with them to discuss the matter. There is no question about their scare, but when I find they wish to push on past the little village, back along the way we have come, I call a halt, dismount from my horse, and demand to know the exact facts of the case, and what they are proposing to do. Then all four begin speaking at once, entreating me not to be obstinate, but to agree to a retreat to some safe spot till the brigands have moved off. "But how do you know that there are any brigands there?" Oh, an old villager, seeing the soldiers riding along, had stopped them and advised them not to enter the village, as forty bandits were even then seated in the inn having their midday meal.

"Well, what of that?" I ask, "I have no quarrel with the bandits, nor they with me, and if you have nothing more startling to tell, I am for going on." "What of that"? shrieks the elder of our noble escort, "is the honourable pastor not aware who these men are, and what they do? Does he not know that we are but four against forty, and that at the very best, if we meet them, it means that they will take from us our ponies and our rifles if not our lives?" "Well, then, you can retreat if you like, but I am an Englishman, and an Englishman never runs away from an enemy. You can go back, and we will continue our journey without you." So I speak, to find myself supported by Marisami and my own men, who are ready to follow where I am prepared to go. But these four soldiers aver that it is my life, and not theirs, that they are concerned about: that two of them are responsible for my, safety: and that while it is a matter of indifference to anyone whether they live or die, the serious questions in the affair gather round my well-being. I will give them the credit for this, that in all their protestations and appeals, regard for my safety seems uppermost. And it is, perhaps, ungenerous to suggest that they cheer themselves with the thought that my safety means theirs. I am bound, however, on the other hand, to assert that I have never seen men in such a mortal "funk" before. The only occasion that comes near it in my recollection is of the Boxer time, when in a Chinese junk on the Shantung coast, we were caught in a storm, most of us rendered helpless by sea-sickness and our escort of Chinese soldiers lay about on the deck, sick and terrified, calling out for their mothers.

Here, faced with a difficulty of a kind I had never met before, every manly element in my nature urges me on: incites me to disregard the frantic appeals of our escort: and tells me that I will be craven to my best instincts, if I flee from an enemy I have

not seen, who quite possibly does not exist. On the other hand, we are no match for forty, or even twenty, desperate men, whose lives in any case are orfeit, who care not whether they die early or late. Counting in the two soldiers we have fallen in with on the road, we are only ten men. The four soldiers are all armed; by this time I have strapped my revolver, loaded in all six chambers, round my waist: Marisami has my shot-gun and about a dozen cartridges, while my Chinese men are absolutely unarmed, and would be useless in an encounter. The problem, therefore, is not of easy solution. My heart revolts from an undignified and cowardly retreat. Yet as I weigh the "pros and cons," it comes to me that I have no right to expose to needless danger the four Chinese lads who have come with me, as would be inevitably the case if I go forward. Moreover, I remember others who do not appear in this narrative, and that for their sakes I have promised to run into no unnecessary peril. At the risk, therefore, of being dubbed a coward by my readers, I have to confess that I consent to be ruled by our escort, insisting only that one man shall remain behind a while, send forward some villager to make enquiries, and then bring us the fullest information that can be obtained. And so the retreat is ordered, and our muleteer wakes up out of his stupor, and travels as I have never seen him travel before or since. Oh the misery of that march! How I hate myself for consenting to it! And how ardently I wish for someone to come and kick me for a coward! I really believe it would have been a relief to me then, though I am not prepared to answer for what might have followed on the kick. It is easy in your armchair to indulge in such platitudes as that "discretion is the better part of valour," but they afford small comfort in such circumstances as were now thrust upon me. To increase our discomfort a windstorm springs up just about this time, and the minute particles of sand dash in our faces like stinging pellets, seeming to chastise us for our cowardice.

Very soon, the soldier we have left behind us overtakes us again with confirmation of the news. It does not occur to me at the time, but I have thought since, that he was remarkably quick in rejoining us, and I now very much doubt whether he had sent any man to glean information or not. There seems nothing to be done but to retreat to Chiench'êng-ying, which village we find is thirty li away from where we were stopped. And there we arrive at 4.30, tired, hot, thirsty, and above all, chagrined to think that our progress has been stopped even temporarily. As we retreat along the road, under the shade of the willow trees that now form an avenue over our heads, and keeping a sharp look-out on all sides, we become conscious that we are being followed by a stranger on horseback. Two of the soldiers turn back to meet him, and find him to be a Mongol who pretends not to understand Chinese. He is well-mounted, but unarmed, and as soon as they have finished with him, he turns suddenly away to the left, and sets off at a sharp trot towards the river. Of course, the soldiers declare he is a bandit scout, and the manner in which he seeks to get clear of them is somewhat confirmatory of their notion.

Later on, when we have forded the Shihlakaho, the mules with Shu Feng, my cook, having gone on ahead, and we are waiting for Yuan Min to come up, not more than 400 yards away, we see five men riding towards the Laoho.

I take them to be soldiers from the camp, but learn later that Shu Feng had fallen in with them. He declares they are brigands. One only is armed, but they ask him where he has come from. He gives some evasive answer and they then inquire whether he knows if anybrigands are still at Hala, mut'ou. He truthfully replies that he has not passed through that village, and after a few more words, the men make off towards the river, where is the ford to which the unknown Mongol has just before ridden so swiftly. I take it that these five also belong to the scouting party, and that probably the solitary Mongol we saw was on his was to meet them.

By 4.30 we are back in Chiench'êng-ying, staying in the inn we occupied on Saturday night. The Chinese are by nature loquacious, and the reason for our coming is soon noised abroad, causing no little excitement in the town. That excitement is increased when a little while later, a cart containing three or four women turns up from a village just west of Halamut'ou; they had fled from their homes on hearing of the proxmity of the brigands. Still later, a cart drawn by seven splendid black mules and, laden with timbers, stops in the street opposite our inn. I go out and speak with the carter myself. His tale is quite clear and consistent, namely, that there are brigands, but they have shrunk from forty to seventeen: that at noon they had forded the river, had their meal at the inn, and then ridden off north: that he had heard of their presence in the neighbourhood, and had driven his cart somewhat out of the line of route, and hidden his animals away till the brigands had gone past: that the two soldiers we had met, whom we had left behind in a grove near the Shihlakaho, had been waiting there still when he passed, but that, on hearing his report, they had mounted their horses and gone off on their errand. So the thing stands! That brigands are in the district seems beyond doubt, and the young sergeant of the town, who has but two men under him, calls out in a tone of high importance and authority, "Second in command, will you see that our rifles are all ready in case of need?" Whether the bandits would interfere with us is another question, of the answer to which I am not sure. And I begin to think that the escort of two soldiers forced upon us by the Hata official, is a menace rather than a protection.

On Friday, May 11, I am awakened before three o'clock by the sound of heavy rain, and remembering that our animals are standing in the yard without cover, I call out for my servant to go and get them placed under shelter. Our muleteer replies that there is no place of shelter. I remind him of the "mênlou" (gate-house), to which he replies that that is already occupied by the two horses of our escort. That is a typical Chinese trick. It will perhaps scarcely be believed that these two soldiers, wakened by the rain, had got up from their beds, tied up their own horses under the gate-houses for shelter and lain down to sleep again without either noticing my animals or calling up my men. I soon have Shu Feng up, and insist that shelter must at once be found for Hansl and Neddy. Half asleep, he tumbles out and for some time I hear him trying to drive pegs into the wall of the gate-house, to which he might tie the halter ropes.

Evidently he cannot manage it alone, for presently I hear him leading the animals into the inn itself. Then one of the soldiers rises to lend him a hand, and in a very few minutes both my beasts are safely sheltered from the rain in the gate-house.

We are all so thoroughly exhausted with our exertions of yesterday that we sleep in, and it is nearly eight o'clock before I realise where I am. The rain has stopped now, and I decide to stay no longer in Chiench'êngying, but to resume our march to Halamut'ou, and there gain all the information I can regarding the bandits, from the innkeeper. Much to my surprise the soldiers, whose courage has returned with the daylight, suggest that we should go ten li further, and make for Tapeihai, the limit of Ch'ihfênghsien in that direction, and where a force of soldiers is to be found. We therefore all have breakfast in comfort, and by 11 a.m. have started out on the road along which we had yesterday fled from an unseen foe.

We have gone but a short distance when we meet a young fellow dressed like an ordinary villager, who turns out to be a soldier from Tapeihai, going with a message to Chiench'êngying. From him we learn that the robbers, having finished their meal at Halamutou, had ridden off to spend the night at Tungyuanpaoshan, in the very quarters we had occupied at midday for our meal, and where we had descended the mine. Had we left the hill by the northern instead of by the southern path, we should have met them face to face,—with what results who can say?

Further on, we meet two more soldiers, one of whom is a young officer, and the other his attendant. They have a great tale to tell of the fight that took place twelve days ago at a place called Machiatze, when they say they killed seven robbers. They are both splendidly mounted on fine grey horses, but Mr. Kao proudly shows us his saddle with blood on it, and a small hole right through it, caused by a bullet, which, as he says, had killed a specially good horse he had owned. He also tells us that one bullet had lodged in his turban during the fight, in which their only losses were three horses killed. I hope I am not becoming unnecessarily suspicious, but I find myself "snuffing salt" as this young officer boasts to us of his prowess. I have never met a braver man than the Chinese soldier—before and after the event. And I have never seen a more humiliating display of arrant cowardice than I was treated to but yesterday, when we learned of the proximity of the brigands.

Lieut. Kao now assures us that the road is quite clear and quiet up to Hsiaohoyen (the small riverside) and the spirits of our escort are above the tree-tops. I hang my head for very shame as I ride through the village from which we had retreated yesterday. I feel as if the very children will mock me as one of those who "p'ao-liao" (run away) at the first scent of danger.

At Halamut'ou, we go into the inn for a few minutes, and interview the old landlord there. His tale is quite direct, and to this effect. In the morning he was going to market at the town of Hsiaohoyen. He had crossed from the west to the east side of the river, when he observed coming towards him, a company of mounted men. As they had both trumpeters, and banners flying, he took them for soldiers and dismounted from his donkey to allow them to pass. There were over thirty of them, mostly Mongols, and he knew

them at once for brigands. A few passed him without speaking, and then one asked him where he had come from. His reply was, west of the river. They then enquired where the ford was, to which, in characteristic Chinese fashion, he replied that that depended on where they wished to go. Their answer was they were bound for Hata to meet somebody. He then gave them the necessary direction, and passed on. Arrived at Halamut'ou, two of them turned up at the inn and asked which was the home of the Ka family, the wealthiest family in the village. Directed there, seventeen of them went and demanded food for themselves and animals, stayed from noon till about the time we were entering the other end of the village, and then went off to stay for the night at Yuanpaoshan. They had done no wrong to anyone, but had been content to demand food for man and beast, and then quietly take themselves away. It seemed quite clear that they were part of the dispersed bands that had fought with the soldiers at Machiatze, having fled in this direction to reassemble at some other point when the chase became less keen. I learned later that it was not the soldiers they had fought with, and fled from, but that tale will come in due course.

We continue our march in a drizzling rain to Tapeihai (the great northern sea), and find quarters in the hospitable home of a Mr. Yang Yi. He is a simple unaffected countryman, and a man of considerable means, having interests also in the mine we had visited. He keeps a fine stud of horses, one a superb, dapple-grey stallion, on which I cast envious eyes, but find the price beyond me.

We have a comfortable and pleasant time with our simple-minded host, who expresses himself as honoured by the visit of foreigners, the very first, in his district. Our escort are particularly anxious that to-morrow we should cross the river to Hsiaohoyen, where there is another force of soldiers, and where they say they must turn us over to someone else. What they are most anxious for is Hata! Their zeal for Hsiaohoyen, I fancy, spells Hata and home!

Saturday morning finds us on the road before six. Leaving this village we take leave of Ch'ihlênghsien, and are now for the first time, travelling in the new district of Chienp'ing. Until 1904, this district was incorporated in the Chiench'ang, or T'atzukou, district, but as it is nearly 500 li from that city, it can be understood that it was quite time some place nearer at hand was made the head of a new department. Hsinch'iu, the seat of the new district, is itself distant 140 li, quite far enough, in such an unsettled part of the world as this.

We reach Hsiaohoyen by 8.30, having crossed the river on a small ferry. Soon after, I send my card to the military official of the place with a message to the effect that, unless the road is very dangerous, we do not desire any escort, but that if there is real danger in the way, sufficient to justify an escort, then they must supply one adequate for protection. To send two, or even four, men with us, would be worse than to let us go without. I have scarcely patience enough to tell of the apology for an officer that came to see me later on. The Major, Wen by name, was stated to be in Hata meeting Prince Su. In his place comes a poor, shiftless creature who rejoices in the name of Hsü Kuo-shün. He is

fifty years of age; his rank, that of a lieutenant; the principal items about him are his bleary-eyes and his whisky-breath. He tells me that it is not in his power to give me an escort, an intimation I much rejoice in, and reply to it that we shall be pleased to go on our way alone. But he suggests that as the road north is uncertain, I had better communicate with the official at Chien-p'inghsien, and wait there till an escort is sent from that city. At that suggestion I simply laugh, and ask him if he thinks I have come so far simply to kick my heels in a Chinese inn, while waiting for an escort I am not at all anxious to have. But he insists that I cannot be allowed to go on without escort. "That," say I, "is your business, not mine. Give me an adequate escort, and I am off within an hour." "But I have no authority to do any such thing," he protests, on which I ridicule him by asking who has authority, if he has not? He goes off now to consult with the assistant in the camp. While I am at my meal, he returns with the brilliant suggestion that I should remain in the town till Major Wen returns from Hata. That is as useless a proposal as that I should communicate with the Ch'iping official, and I ask him who is to reimburse me for my daily expenses, while I wait upon his pleasure. I repeat my intention to go on, and then add that, unless the escort is made fairly large, the presence of soldiers is a peril rather than a protection and that I much prefer to have nothing to do with them.

Once again he leaves me, to return in a few minutes to say that since I will not fall in with any of his proposals, he has arranged that the "hui-shang" (community) of the little town will send a few men with me as escort. This is adding insult to injury with a vengeance.

To expect me to take, over a road infested with brigands, any Tom, Dick, or Harry Hooligan they can find, put a gun in his hands, and a braided coat on his back, and call him a soldier, is asking too much of my credulity. I indignantly tell him that his offer is an insult, and producing my passport, I lay it on the table before him, remind him that this is my authority for my presence in the locality, and that if he chooses to "ch'ing k'an" (lightly regard) that, then he can reckon with his betters if anything should happen to me or my party. With which warm outburst, I request him to leave my room, and tell him I want to see neither him nor his men. In all my experience of Chinese officials, I have never met with any man so utterly inane and helpless as this creature, and if he is any sample of the military who are appointed to keep order there, no wonder that lawlessness abounds, and iniquity is brazen and bold.

Bidding farewell to the two men who had accompanied us from Hata, and making them a small monetary present, I cross the river with my men once more, and positively breathe more freely as I once more realise that we are our own masters, and, come weal, come woe, we are to be dependent not on useless Chinese soldiers, but on our own ingenuity, and above all, on the "good hand of our God upon us", as we go north.

THE SAND DESERTS OF THE LAOHO.

The first thing I do as soon as we cross the river, is to take my revolver from my saddle-bags and unload it in the presence of my men. Cast upon our own resources, and going into a district that is said to be over-run with brigands, it occurs to me that a loaded revolver is an element of danger. In the event of our meeting the bandits, I am fully resolved to offer no resistance and enter into no controversy with them. All that they want they may have, but if they should come upon a revolver loaded in all its chambers, there is no knowing what mischief they might do with it. Hence it is safer unloaded. But I have another, and more important reason, for doing what may appear to my readers a somewhat melodramatic thing. I want my men to feel that there is no need to fear the brigands, and to unload the revolver before them proves a capital object-lesson. Glad am I to hear Wéng, the writer, say, as I put the empty revolver back into my saddle-bag, "Yu Chu pao hu." (The Lord will protect us.)

All the same, I am bound to admit that while we are tramping over the remainder of our route, every horseman we see approaching is an object of suspicion until he has passed us. The judicial adage of "every man is innocent until he is proved guilty," is in our case reversed into "every man is guilty until we have proved him innocent," and it is always an immense relief when the numerous horsemen we meet, pass us with a courteous "Mendou" (Peace), a Chinese "Shang na li ch'ü," or "Ch'i han ch'ing." (Where are you going?) The latter phrase is Mongolian.

Once across the river, we resume our march by its western bank, and paying no regard either to cart-road or by-path, we follow round the winding stream. Just after one o'clock, as we are passing a small hamlet of three or four houses, a man rushes out to tell us we are quite off the track. Do what we may, we cannot get him to understand that we are off the track by design, and intent only on following the course of the river that flows past his door. Here, however, it so winds as to form the letter S, and so we cross by a small path at the end of the village, to meet the river again at the other side. Just then a wind gets up, and within a few minutes we are in the thick of the thickest dust-storm I have ever known in my life. That in which we entered Hata on Sunday last was enough to satisfy any reasonable man for one trip, but this, to use a Lancashire phrase, "caps" all. We struggle on against it for over an hour, the wind blowing round us fiercely, and the dust and sand driving in unbroken clouds into our faces. I am sorely tempted, in passing a rich grove of willow trees, to call a halt and make the best of a bivouac in the open air, but just then most fortunately we fall in with a

Chinese farm labourer, who leads us for some distance and then points out a path, which he says will take us to his master's house, where we can get accommodation for the night. I want him to pilot us all the way, but this he dare not do, lest his master should chastise him for introducing strangers into his house as guests. With some difficulty we find the house, and after the necessary preliminary palaver, we are provided with rooms. I get a dirty but quiet room to myself, while my men share a large room with the labourers. And well for us is it that we are here. Within half an-hour of our arrival the storm becomes still more furious. The darkened sky becomes darker still. The wind howls like the raging of the sea, and at times the air is positively black with dust, black as midnight. I only record the bare fact when I say that in the small room I occupy, I cannot see the wall on the other side from where I am seated, nor two feet from our door in the yard. They say it is the worst dust-storm they have so far had this year, but that on one occasion last year it blew like this for three successive days and nights, causing them to lose many of their sheep and goats. I will never grumble at Tientsin dust-storms any more after seeing this one. What we have inside the Great Wall is whole continents behind the storm of Polihuoshao.

The next day is Sunday and we all feel that we would be glad of a day's rest after our exposure to the storm. But though our hosts are extremely kind and refuse to accept payment for anything we have had, they give us no invitation to remain over the day until our loads are all on the mules, and at 5.25 a.m. we are ready for the road. Then the steward of the household comes out with the host's card to bid us farewell, and politely asks me if we will not honour them by resting there that day. Had he only spoken half-an-hour earlier, he would have been surprised at the alacrity with which the invitation would have been accepted. But an invitation given in this way is merely "hao hua" (good words), and never intended to be accepted seriously. So contenting ourselves with presents to the servants, and grateful thanks to the steward and family, we resume our tramp northward.

Polihuoshao (the fire where glass is burned) is divided into three sections, called respectively, Shang, Chung and Hsia (Upper, Middle, and Lower). Where we have stayed is the middle section. Our host is the "hsiang pao" (village elder) of his district, and therefore a person of no small importance. He was from home during our visit, but we learn that he farms 1,200 mow (200 acres) of land, employs forty labourers, keeps twelve horses and twelve oxen, over one hundred sheep and goats, while the pigs and dogs about the place do not count. The district is nicely wooded, with poplars and willows only, but the land is entirely sandy. Hence when the wind blows, the sand flies as we saw it yesterday. Wolves and foxes are said to be plenteous all about, though we see no traces of any. And here I learn a new name for the former. Instead of being called by the usual name of "lang," wolves are always spoken of as "lai ti" (he who comes), which name, as pronounced by the dwellers hereabouts is wonderfully like the Cockney pronunciation of the English "lady."

Five li from the house where we found such welcome refuge we have to ford the Yangch'angho which flows into the Laoho four li further down. At the ford, though the bed of the stream is some 70 ft.

wide, the water is no more than about 15ft., which makes it so unimportant as scarcely to merit mention, were it not that on certain maps extant it is shown as a fairly broad river. Near here we pass a large house, with tiled roofs (the first we have seen since leaving Chien-ch'êngying), and elaborately carved verandahs. This is said to be the residence of a wealthy man named T'êng, whose wealth lies in his land and his herds.

Our morning march lies not along the bank of the river, but a li or two away, from where, however, we have the river in sight, though not able to get nearer owing to the broken nature of the ground. We have our meal at a small place called Lanchiahala, and from there make straight across the fields to the river. There we climb an easy pass over the T'ikushan, (Great Lonely Hill), and descend on the other side almost into the river bed. Taking a new bearing here, we are once again treated to a dust-storm, not so bad as yesterday's, but bad enough to tear away the drawing paper from the plane-table, and compel us to abandon for the afternoon all hopes of further sketching. In the lulls of the storm, we take bearings with the prismatic compass, and so remedy the temporary loss of the plane-tablet We follow along the river bank as well as we possibly can, making our own paths over dried watercourses and ploughed fields as they come in our way. What we see most of is dust, but fortunately for us, it is whirling along from behind us, and so our march is a trifle more comfortable than that of yesterday. Emerging out of a dust cloud after over three hours' march, we see a hamlet perched on the side of a hill. Riding past it is a Mongol, who no sooner sees us than he wheels right round and comes towards us at a sharp trot. Naturally, our first thought is of brigands, but when he gets near it is only to ask us where the ferry is. Seeing us so near the river, he has concluded that we have just crossed on the ferry, and comes to seek information. But we know no more than he does, and he rides on ahead on his quest.

We have been told what we shall find no inns this evening, but that we will get accommodation in the house of a wealthy man named Ch'ên Wen-sheng. Our inquiries in the hamlet of Shantsui-tzu (Mountain Lips), prove that in the storm we have come past the place, but most unexpectedly we find here a very small inn, into which we just manage to squeeze ourselves. Lordly palace was never more welcome!

Wind! Wind!! Wind!!! Dust! Dust!! Dust!!! Another morning of it, as on Monday, May 1, we tramp along the river bed from Shantsui-tzu to Laofu (Old Palace). Again we find it is not possible to use the plane-table, and the route is taken by prismatic bearings. Packing the table on one of the mules, I order Yuan Min to lead a couple of them, so that we may get more quickly over the ground. The change of occupation is bad for him, for when we have gone seven miles, he finds he has left behind him the plane-table ruler. He has therefore to tramp back all the way to Shantsui-tzu, and does not reach the Laofu till some hours after us. Later on, we discover that a brass screw is missing from the tripod. I offer a reward to a crowd of Mongol urchins to go back and seek it. They go readily enough, but the screw is never found, and for the rest of the way, we have to tie the tripod up with string.

The path, which we make ourselves, is this morning level and easy. It may sound incredible, but there are places in this section of the river where the bed is five and even seven English miles broad. Of course, there is nothing like that quantity of water, but the natives declare it is usually covered after the summer rains. It is simply amazing to find such a broad stream here and in the summer it would be quite impossible to walk along the bed we tramp on this morning. So we go till we reach Hsiaoniuts'ün (Small Ox Village), where we get up on a hard road for a few li, and follow the river round in a sort of bay to the ferry. Here the river runs direct east for two li, and then turns a sudden corner to the north. We cut across the country through the Mongol village of Malienchuang, with the river on our right, till we reach K'angk'ang, and join the river again. From K'angk'ang, we head due north, climb up from the river-bed to a wide table-land, almost entirely uncultivated, and resembling what I suppose we shall find the "grass-land" to be. The little pass we climb is so steep and so full of drift-sand, that the mules have great difficulty in getting up, and the load of the yellow mule overturns and rolls off his back. The nature of the ground does not make it easy to get him loaded up again, and for some ten or fifteen minutes, I have to act as muleteer, while the men are struggling with the load.

Down again to the river-bed after we have gone about two miles, and we reach the Laotu of the Mongol Prince of Aohan. But I have never had a greater disappointment in the way of sight-seeing than meets us here. Instead of a sumptuous Palace surrounded by tall trees and lofty walls (for so my imagination had run), we find one of the most dilapidated and wretched Mongol villages it has been my lot to see. There seems scarcely a decent house in the place, and the appearance of the people is in keeping with the village. It is called the Laofu because it was formerly the residence of the Aohan Prince. For that district, the situation is ideal. The river flows round in a wide sweep: low-lying hills roll away behind what remains of the village: across the river are lofty hills in all sorts of fantastic shapes: while in the far north stand several ranks of rugged mountains. But about fourteen years ago a strong party of brigands made a raid upon the place, robbed and then fired the palace, leaving it in much the sorry condition it is found in to-day. The Prince of that day, either fearing the "fêngshui" (wind and water) of the place was bad, or that the brigands would again come and destroy his palace, refused to build upon the old site, allowed it to fall into yet worse ruin, and selected a more secluded spot in the midst of the hills five miles north. There his new palace was built, and there at the present day is the seat of government. The Erh Yeh (Second Prince), brother of the Prince of that day, yet has his residence at the Laofu, but it is nothing different from many of the better-class Chinese homes we met with on our tramp.

The Aohan Banner is at present in a condition of chaos. Students of Chinese affairs may remember that in the "North-China Daily News" of February 1905, an intimation appeared of the murder in Peking of a young Mongol Prince, who was hacked to death by his personal attendant on the first day of the Chinese New Year.

This young Prince was only nineteen years of age, and the murder was of so brutal and fiendish a nature that one felt there must have been reasons for it which did not at the time appear in print. It is news to me to learn that I am now actually n the territory of the murdered Prince. More surprising still is it to learn that the inn in which we stay is built in the same compound where once the murderer lived. Just opposite to my room is a dismantled and ruined house of three rooms. Outside is another house in similar state. The trunks of what were once thick-girth trees still protrude from the ground. Curious as a tramp ought to be, I ask the reason for all this, and stumble, almost as if by accident, on the details of a most sordid tragedy. No Mongol of the Aohan Banner will speak of the affair. They all have an adroit way of reminding you that the murder took place in Peking, and that they can therefore know nothing about it. But the "changkueiti" of our inn is Chinese, employed as manager by a Mongol proprietor, and he is nothing loth to tell us all he knows. His tale, supplemented and confirmed by other facts I glean elsewhere, is of too sordid a character to reproduce in public print. Briefly the facts gather round two men and one woman. The one man was the young and immoral Prince, kind and indulgent in many ways, but one who had frequently wronged the female members of his retainers' households. The second man was his slave, his personal attendant. The woman was the young and pretty wife of the slave. It is the old tale of vice, and hatred aroused by wrong, so that on the first afternoon of the Chinese New Year (1905), while the Prince was resting after a round of calls on high officials in Peking, the slave went into his bedroom, and with a "ts'ai tao" (vegetable chopper), hacked the young Prince to death in a passion of revenge.

This was on the first day of the New Year. On the 14th, a messenger reached the Laofu with the awful news. Every member of he murderer's family that could be secured was taken. Before night, his houses had been demolished; his trees cut down; a brother and a li tle son arrested and thrown into prison at the New Palace, where they still remain. He himself, by Imperial order, was put to death by the "lingch'ih" process. Within a month of the murder, the young bride of the murdered Prince (a daughter of Na Wang), either died of grief or committed suicide, and was buried in the same grave as her husband. The affairs of the Banner were taken over by two uncles of the Prince, one of whom is a Lama; but I have been so mismanaged that everything is in disorder. The soldiers supported by the Prince, being short of pay and provisions, have deserted, and joined the ranks of the brigands that infest the country, so that now it is said the robber bands of that section are largely composed of Mongols, a thing unknown in former days. The Emperor either will not or cannot (because of conflicting claims), appoint a successor to the Prince, and it is no exaggeration to say that not only at the Laofu, but throughout the length and breadth of the territory nominally under the Aohan Banner, a curse seems to rest upon everything. The people are discontented: the state is disorganised; the routes are unsafe. And all because a young boy, trained in the vices of Oriental despotism, would

have his wilful way, and dare a desperate man.

Our advent into the Laofu is a cause of great interest to the simple people there, and we have a number of visitors to look at and chat with us. The wind blows strong, and the dust still whirls, but we are comparatively well off in the inn where we are quartered. From an intelligent young Mongol who speaks excellent Chinese, we learn, for the first time, that the way before us to the junction of the Shiramuren and the Laoho leads over heavy sand-hills, where no tracks can be traced, and where, unless we have a guide, we are likely to find ourselves in great difficulties. Acting on his advice, I send to the residence of the second Prince to know if I can be supplied with a guide, whose expenses I offer to pay. The reply is that they have no authority to do anything without orders, but that, on learning of my arrival, and anticipating some such request, they have already sent a mounted messenger to the new palace, and will communicate with me on his return.

The upshot of it is that next morning, after being delayed by heavy rains, we have with us first, two, and then three, mounted Mongols, all of whom speak Chinese, and who have orders to guide and interpret for us until we reach the settlement of sounding waters, where is said to be that wonderful phenomenon of a disappearing river. It becomes less wonderful as we get nearer to it.

As we take our journey this morning, I have my first real sight of how Mongols can ride. Leaving the Laofu, we curve round a wide marsh in which the river formerly flowed, and then mount a hill that is not conspicuous either for its smoothness or its easy-going. As we descend on the other side, so steep and rough that I dismount and lead my pony, we hear behind us the pattering hoofs of a galloping horse. This carries our third guide, who has galloped up one side of the hill, and now gallops down to overtake us, pulls himself sharply up just before reaching us, flings himself from the saddle by a dexterous leap, and stooping down on one knee, wishes us "Peace." The whole proceeding seems so reckless that I ask him if he is not afraid for either his horse's legs or his own neck, to receive the laconic reply, "Shang shan, hsia shan, hê p'ing ti yi yang." (To climb a hill or descend one, is the same as to go on level ground). Certainly the Mongols, whatever else they may or may not be, are superb horsemen, and it is one of the sights of a tramp like this, to see how men, women and children (for all are equally at home in the saddle), will spring on to the back of a horse, and tear off like the wind across the plain.

Our distance to-day is only a short twenty-five li, at the end of which we find ourselves expected and treated as honoured guests at a large distillery in a village named Yut'ienkao. This distillery is owned by the Lama Prince who is at present administering the Banner, and it is by his orders that we are entertained there. But for that, I question whether we should have got in at all. For the manager and all the people in the distillery are Chinese, and my experience is, that until he knows you and is satisfied of your bona fides, there is no more inhospitable man in existence than the Chinese.

The land along which we have travelled is largely uncultivated, and the population is very sparse. There is now but little timber about, and so we are in the regions where cow manure is used for fuel.

For several days, we had found the water exceedingly unpalatable, by reason of soda in the ground. The trouble was all the worse because we had so much wind and dust to encounter, and every time we drank found our thirst still more intense. At Yut'ienkao, distillery though it is, we find the water so very bad that none of us can drink it with pleasure. I therefore attempt successfully an old trick of Abbe Huc's, of which he tells in his absorbing book of travels. I first boil some water in a pan, pour it into a kettle into which a few small pieces of charcoal have been thrown, boil it again, and then strain it through a clean linen handkerchief. The experiment is so successful that Marisami and I celebrate our triumph by immediately drinking two kettlefuls of tea, and for the first time in three days, feel that our thirst is quenched. On this day also we see the first camel of our trip, and the first circular hut commonly used by the Mongols.

It is raining again on the morning of Wednesday, May 16, but we get away by six o'clock; march along a fairly level, but winding road, and by 9.30 have reached the Chinese village of Hach'ilai. There is no inn here, and our guides experience some difficulty in finding rooms where we may have our meal. As I walk into the compound of a well-to-do Chinese, I hear a loud and angry voice shout out, "Why do you come and bother us Chinese? Why cannot you go to Mongols?" Such are the inhospitable queries thrown at the head of our Mongol guide. But when I explain to the irate old countryman that all we want is a little temporary accommodation, for which we are quite prepared to pay, the old man is somewhat mollified, and we are able to get our needs supplied and the inner man refreshed.

Just before noon, we start out again, and are at last amid the sand-deserts of the Laoho. From Hach'ilai to Shap'otzu is 155 li, or fifty-two miles, in a tolerably direct line. And for all that distance, look north, south, east or west, as far as the eye can reach, one can see nothing but sand-hills of varying form and height, stretching away on both sides of the river. Our experiences on this section of our tramp vary but little. Such roads as there are require an expert to find. It would be a practical impossibility for any stranger to travel without a guide. The sand is of an extremely fine character. The hills range from 300 feet. to 1,500 feet. high. The slightest breath of wind lifts the light and delicate sand, and in a few hours will obliterate the most distinct path. The wind is also constantly causing the hills to change their form, so that there are practically no permanent landmarks by which the way may be traced. More than once or twice, our various guides had to stop and cogitate awhile, before they satisfied themselves that we were going the right way. And to complete the list of difficulties, the Mongol settlements on the way are so few and so distant that without a guide to lead you, you would be overtaken by darkness while still on the march, with consequences that may be better imagined than described.

I need not relate in detail our tramp across these sand-deserts. Every march was most fatiguing. The loose sand makes but a poor path for a tramp. The men toiled on hour after hour, thirsty, hot and weary. The mules

strained as they carried their heavy roads up the hills, and grunted as they descended the precipitous and sliding banks on the other side. So exhausting are the tramps that I stick closer to the saddle than on any other part of the journey, though I pity the poor beast that has to carry me all the way. And we all agree that it proves the most wearying, most rough, and most hungry time we have ever known in our lives.

As we leave Hach'ilai, the sky looks very threatening. Black clouds are forming to the north-west, and there is every promise of another big blow. Even our experienced Mongols are apprehensive as they see these clouds, and urge us to push on as fast as we can. To be overtaken in a real duststorm here, they say, is a contingency to be dreaded. For when the route cannot be traced, it is impossible to proceed. And it is dangerous to halt, for the sand whirls round in such profusion as would within a few hours, bury any unlucky traveller who dared to stop for shelter.

I begin my climb up the first sandhill somewhat badly for myself. In some way or other, I stumble as I am leading my pony, and Hansl, following closely behind, accidentally gives me a sharp kick on the left ankle which causes me exquisite pain for a few hours. Our destination this evening is to be Hsiaohsiangshui (the Little Sounding Waters). The guides declare it is only thirty li. It proves to be fifty. And so it is all the way along the deserts from Hach'ilai to K'ulukou. The distances are always under-estimated. The explanation given by the Mongols is, "Oh, you see, the only means we have of calculating distances is the time it takes us to travel between places. And as we always travel on horseback at a sharp trot, if not at a gallop, we get over the ground so much more quickly than the Chinese do, and consequently are apt to under-estimate the distances."

On the way from Hach'ilai to Hsiaohsiangshui, for the first ten miles we see neither human being nor habitation. Then we reach Lienhua-p'aotzu (Lotus Blossom Marsh) and meet two drovers on horseback one an old woman about sixty years of age—riding about from place to place looking after the animals in and about the marsh. Three miles further on we pass Hep'aotzu (the Black Marsh) where there are about half-a-dozen Mongol huts, the inhabitants of which regard us as they might a travelling circus. The next three miles seem very long, and we are all very weary, when we observe the horse of one of our guides tied up in front of a Mongol house and realize that we have reached Hsiaohsiangshui. At the door are gathered the male members of the settlement, headed by the master, Pao Lao-yeh. They all advance to meet us make the regular Mongol obeisance by bending the right knee, and then escort us into a clean and comfortable room, built in Chinese style, and adorned with red cushions and rugs as for an honoured guest. The welcome is explained by the fact that one of our guides has ridden on ahead, and announced our coming.

One by one the senior male members of the settlement come into my room, wish me peace in the orthodox fashion, and honour me by offering me their snuff bottles to sniff at. All Mongols are inveterate snuff-takers. Each man carries his snuff-bottle in his girdle, and courtesy requires that to every man he meets, he should offer his bottle with a low bow, and in both hands. At the same time, he

receives the snuff-bottle from the other man. Each holds the respective bottle in his hands for a moment, puts it to the nose and sniffs at the outside, and politely hands it back again. It always pleases a Mongol when a foreigner understands the custom of the country, and the courtesy is so simple and easy a matter that there is no difficulty while in Rome, in, doing as Rome does.

The settlement we have reached is composed of three families, our host being the head of all. He is known as the Tama Laoyeh of the district, i.e., he is responsible to his feudal lord, the Prince of Aohan, for the production of 750 t'aichi, or soldiers, on call. His influence is supreme in the district allotted to his care. Not even the civil magistrate of a Chinese county wields more power than these petty officials of the Mongol banners, who are to be met with wherever you go. "He speaks and it is done." "Go, and he goeth; come, and he cometh; do this, and he doeth it." These familiar words find their perfect exemplification in the home that shelters us at the Little Sounding Waters. Once every two years, the various Tama Laoyehs of the different banners are required to accompany their royal master to Peking, as part of his retinue. Hence they can all speak Chinese, though I did not meet one who was able to go much beyond 人 "jen" (man) in the recognition of Chinese characters. Nor are they all able to read their own language. They are simply uneducated dwellers of the desert, who have their horses, oxen, sheep and goats, grazing on the pastures around their settlements, and who have had handed down to them through many generations, the office and authority they so arbitrarily wield.

Of the cordiality of Mr. Pao's welcome to us, there can be neither doubt nor question. The best he has is placed at the disposal of myself and my men. But—he casts envious eyes on, and does more than give broad hints concerning, some of the most necessary articles in our equipment. Our dark spectacles, of which we each have one pair, are special favourites of his. He lays hold of those worn by my writer Wêng, soon after we get in, and wears them with an air of childish dignity for some hours. Next day, he takes mine out of my hand and puts them on his nose with the remark, "What do you, a young man, want with spectacles that are only intended for an old man like me?" I do not take the hint, nor do I fall in with his suggestion that I should "sell" him the old bow that was given to me by my Chinese host at the Tamingch'êng. The old gentleman is also an inveterate smoker, his pipe being scarcely ever out of his mouth. During the night, when my men are sharing the "k'ang" (brick-bed) with him in the large room, they are disturbed by one of his female slaves coming into the room, lighting his pipe for him, and handing it to the old man for a whiff as he lies in bed. Add to this his taste for whisky, and his power of garrulous speech, and my readers can perhaps picture for themselves the Tama Laoyeh of Hsiaohsiangshui.

At last we are "among the Mongols," sure and certain. This is the pastoral life in all its native simplicity. We hear the cows lowing for their little ones as they come slowly over the sand-hills towards their home as daylight fades. We see what we have never seen in China, women and

girls milking the cows with supple fingers, while the calves protest against being robbed of "that which is their own." But let not my readers conjure up in their minds, pictures of rosy-cheeked damsels in spotless print dresses, such as they are used to at home. Rosy-cheeked some of these Mongol girls are: healthy and strong without a doubt. But spotless? Oh, dear no! Clean? Ask not the question! I have a great admiration for the untiring industry, the capacity for hard work, that the Mongol woman displays. So great a contrast from the idle, lazy, lordly life of the Mongol man! But, alas and alas! Clean is the last word you would think of in connection with her. I think the Mongol woman, generally speaking, and judging only as I saw her in her several homes, is quite the dirtiest specimen of her sex I have seen anywhere? And that means something after a decade of life in North-China. Poor creature! She is more to be pitied than blamed. She is the beast of burden in the Mongol home. She carries the water, gathers the fuel, lights the fire, prepares the food, tends the cattle, feeds the dogs, rears the children, rises before the sun, rests after the moon, and scarcely finds time to wash her dirty face, clean her filthy hands, or comb her touzled hair. And her lord and master, the Mongol man, idles round the live-long day, plays the gentleman at large, smokes his pipe and drinks his whisky, and only rouses himself to energy when he goes to the hunt, and spends three days a month in chasing frightened hares across the plain, or trying to bring down pheasants with his old fire-gun.

It is at Hsiaohsiangshui that we first make the close acquaintance of the Mongol dogs. They are worth knowing, in order that, when once known, they may be avoided. Big, strong brutes they are, and living in such lonely places, the rare visitors to their settlements are sure of a vociferous, if not kindly, welcome, from the canine mouth. They come out in pairs and double-pairs to meet you. Up on the level "grass-land," where there is nothing to obstruct the vision, they will run out two or three li to greet you, and follow you to the huts barking and yelping at the heels of your horse. They are really curs for whom one can have but little respect, but despise them as you may, it is never safe to dismount from your horse till the inhabitants of the house you seek have come out and driven them away. Foot-passengers (of whom there are but few) never travel without two sticks, a long one in the left hand to keep the dogs at bay, a shorter, in the right hand to teach "Towser" some physical culture if he comes too near. But the curious thing about these dogs is, that though you are the veriest stranger, they cease their clamour and opposition as soon as you enter their master's courtyard. There they accept you as a member of the family. But put your foot outside the gate again; the temporary treaty of peace is broken, you are again an enemy to be barked at, if not bitten. Your little trips of "look-see" round the settlement are, therefore, always to be undertaken under the escort of a resident.

We are also in the land of circular huts, or tents, as they are often called. Our host has four in his courtyard, though, being a well-to-do man, he has imitated the Chinese fashion in building an orthodox mud house. The tents are made of a light wooden framework, covered with felt, in some cases having an extra covering of reeds. Inside,

there is an octagonal wooden platform raised some three or four inches from the ground, on which the Mongols squat by day, and sleep by night, while in the centre is the iron boiler which holds the never-extinguished fire, the smoke escaping through the hole in the roof above. Of course, these tents can be easily and quickly dismantled, and removed to another place, as is often the case, though not nearly so commonly as is popularly supposed.

At Hsiaohsiangshui we are within easy reach of the disappearing river. Wonderful things in this wonderful land have a way of becoming less wonderful as you get nearer to them. So is it in this case. On the morning of May 17, our host himself offers to escort us to the next station, and while the mules go straight forward over the regular route, he takes me to see first the Small, and then the Large, Sounding Waters. The former is a mere trifle of a rapid between two massive rocks that bar the rush of the river, and scarcely worth making a detour to see. However, the sight of it is helpful in enabling me to check anticipations over the latter. One hundred miles from it I was told that the sound of the waters could be heard fifteen li before you reach them. I think fifteen yards would be nearer the mark. I had also been told that the river first climbed a high hill and then disappeared into unexplored caverns beneath the earth. Alas for my hopes as a discoverer, that I have to describe Tahsiangshui as a very ordinary waterfall on the Laoho, where the level of the river drops some twenty or thirty feet, and the rushing waters sing a tolerably deep bass note as they hurry past the rocks gathered round the corner. My old host informs me that in the summer, the waters "kung hsiang" (make greater sounds). I am quite prepared to believe that, but let no future traveller expect to find a rival to Niagara in the Sounding Waters of the Shat'okuo. One thing gives me satisfaction. I am the very first Westerner who ever heard these Sounding Waters. Two has years ago, while the Russo-Japanese war was on, four Japanese officers from Peking, the senior of whom was known as Ying Ta-jen, stayed some months as guests of the Aohan Prince at the New Palace. Among their many excursions in the district, they made one to this waterfall. But no man fromthe West has been there before me, and the meagre satisfaction of having stood where no other Occidental has stood, must needs atone for any disappointment the sight of the place afforded me.

From Hsiangshui we go forward three li to a Lama temple of the same name, where we find our mules resting in the shade of some willow trees, with two or three Lamas waiting for our arrival. As we have already travelled ten miles, we decide to stop here for our meal, and find the Lamas very attentive to every order of Mr. Pao Hsiangshuimiao is under the govern. ance of a "Huô Fô" (Living Buddha), but he is reported to have gone on pilgrimage to Tibet, and not even his rooms can be opened for our inspection. The Lama temples are of quite a distinct type as compared with the temples seen in Chihli and Shantung. The temple itself always stands in a compound apart, and is used only for the daily exercises of religion. The Lamas, who may range in number from thirty to one thousand, (in some cases there are said to be as many as

three or four thousand attached to one temple), reside in little huts that are clustered round the main building. In all cases, we found that the temple settlement are inhabited entirely by the Lamas. There is no mixed population permitted in the places sacred to to the faith. Only in rare cases are there laymen (blackmen, the Mongols call them), found living in their midst. Women are never found. I fancy we are in strange company among the Lamas at Hsiangshuimiao. The senior man we see is a coarse, brutal-faced man, who finds it convenient not to understand Chinese. Mr. Pao, who has escorted us hither, explains that the Lamas regret they can give us but poor cheer, since they have but recently returned home, having been fugitives for nearly twelve months. When I ask for an explanation of their having run away for so long, he proceeds, "Oh, last year a beggar died near this temple, and his relatives laid accusation against the Lamas. The magistrate of Chienp'ing-hsien sent runners to investigate, and the Lamas, being afraid, all ran away." The tale does not hang together somehow, and some time later, when Mr. Pao and the Lamas are out of the room, a Chinese friend of the farmer, who has been with us to the waterfall, leans forward and whispers to me that the so-called beggar was a wealthy merchant from Hata: that stopping here for one night, the Lamas had first murdered and then robbed him: that, afraid of the consequences, they had fled before the accusations of the murdered man's relatives: that, only a few weeks before they had got the affair closed by a payment of Tls. 3,000. I ask to whom this sum has been paid, and the oracular answer is, "Ask the magistrate. He knows best." And the spice of Scot in me, asks the question, "Has the pilgrimage of the Living Buddha to Tibet at this time, any relation to the mysterious death of the beggar-merchant?"

After our meal, we say farewell to Mr. Pao, and with two old men, one a ragged and dirty old Lama, we set out on another march. They say it is thirteen li. Again we prove it fifty. This is the worst bit of all the road we travel. Sand, sand, and nothing but sand, and only one settlement sighted all the way. At one point, we come to where our guides say here was once a road. But we are on the top of a sand-hill some 500 feet high. On the left is a deep ravine. On the right, the sand runs sheer into the river, which here flows sluggishly along. There is only a knife-like edge running down at an angle of 45 degrees, and our muleteer fears to risk his animals with their loads. I therefore go first, leading my pony behind me. The depth of the sand may be gauged from the fact that I sink in up to my knees. Very gingerly do the mules follow down, for a slip will mean a sudden descent into either the ravine or the river. And we all heave a sigh of relief as we safely reach the bottom, and then skirt along the edge of the water on a path not more than a foot wide.

At 5.45 we reach the Yimachanmiao (Post-Horse Station Temple), another Lama settlement where at first we meet with a boisterous welcome from the dogs, and a sullen non-welcome from the Lamas. For a time it seems that we are to have no accommodation, but we fortunately discover a Chinese carpenter who is working for

the Abbot, and through him we make it clear that we are going no further, and must be provided with rooms and provisions, for which we will pay. We have here another sorry comment on Lama morality. The Abbot, a burly fellow of forty-five, who speaks Chinese imperfectly, conducts us to a tiny hut where we can stretch our limbs. The Lamas naturally crowd after us with the curiosity of children. Arrived in the rooms, the Abbot advises me to "hsiao hsin tung hsi" (be careful about the things). Thinking he means the incense paraphernalia in the rooms, I promise him that nothing shall be so much as fingered by us. To which he makes instant reply," Oh, it is not our things I am afraid of. It is your things I want to be careful about. If anything should be stolen from you, what could we do?" Considering that the only people there who could steal from us were his own Lamas, the Abbot unwittingly gave us an exposition of morals as practised by Buddhist votaries.

Our friend the Abbot has no sooner delivered himself in this way than he clears the little yard of all the Lamas present, and to make assurance doubly sure, forbids any of them to come near us again.

We find here that rumours are rife as to the activities of the brigands. They are not here known by the common Manchurian name of Hunghutze. The name applied to them is Matsei (Horse-thieves). Further up, they are spoken of by the dignified name of Mak'ê (Horse-guests). The unrest is used by the Abbot in the attempt to excuse himself from sending a guide with us next morning. After a long discussion, in which we are largely indebted to the Chinese carpenter again, he promises to send with us a simple, good-natured Lama who understands enough Chinese to help us along. I learn that the Chinese carpenter is a native of the Chinchou district, and that he has been here for some years. Wishing to show our appreciation of his help, I tell him we hope to pass through Chinchou in a few weeks, and offer to take any letters for his family he dares to entrust to us. He thanks me and declines. Next morning, I learn that Wêng had made him the same offer, but his answer had been that he did not dare to let his whereabouts be known, even to his own family. Years ago, he was involved in a "jen-ming" (murder) case, and had to flee from justice, and must needs be content to live, and prepared to die, in that desolate region where the yamen-runners rarely go. Such strange company did we keep on our tramp.

Off next morning at five, we march over more sand-hills of similar type to those already passed. Here however, we get among gnarled and stunted willow shrubs, and thick undergrowth. A narrow path usually lies through the growth,and every now and again we hear the cry of pheasants. Some turnings along wrong paths, and some skirting of wide, but not deep, marshes, lead us to the settlement of K'ünt'uling. There are only four or five houses here, and we are welcomed by another Mr. Pao, who like the hero of Hsiaohsiangshui, is also a Lama Laoyeh. The old gentleman is basking in the sun as we draw near, and rises up in patriarchal simplicity to welcome us to his home. He is a man of finer manners, and I should say,

better heart, and impresses my men most favourably because he gives them a rare luxury by adding some fat pork to their millet, while Marisami and I for the first time are regaled with fresh milk.

AT THE CONFLUENCE OF THE RIVERS.

Two miles beyond K'ünt'uling, we leave the sand-hills behind us and find ourselves travelling over a hard road that leads through thick woods to Ch'akantaohai. Across the river to the east, and away to the north of us, we can still see the sand-hills towering up against the skyline. The woods we now traverse are composed entirely of weather-beaten and unlovely willow trees, rotting by their very profusion. So long as you keep to the cart-road you can get along all right, but to step into the midst of the trees is almost impossible, since the undergrowth is such a tangle that progress is only possible at the risk of torn clothing and scratched faces.

At the Mongol village of Ch'akantaohai, we are guided first to the hut of an old man who ranks as "Pait'u," i.e., he has the oversight of ten families. This old man is an almost identical double of the portraits of Count Tolstoi, with long white straggling beard, and bushy eyebrows, and I much regret that the light is not good enough to enable me to take a picture of him. He cannot speak Chinese, but sitting down upon his dog to keep it from biting his unexpected guests, he motions us into a dirty and wretched hut, from which his womenfolks have just escaped on catching sight of the foreigners. It is not possible, however, for us to squeeze ourselves in there, and eventually he sends us on another two miles to what he says is a better house, where we can get accommodation.

This place is but little better than that we have left, but "necessity knows no law," it is now almost dark, and both we and the householders have to make the best of our circumstances. The man of the house is away from home, and there are only two women left in charge. One is an old dame of seventy-five, whom I at first take for a Lama, since she has her head completely shaved and is dressed in male attire. I learn later that the Mongol women, either at fifty years of age, or when they become widows, must all shave their heads, and become family Lamas, having their little altars set up in their homes, where with greater or lesser regularity they conduct worship. The younger woman is engaged in the laborious task of preparing the meal for their evening food. This is "ta'ao mi" (grass millet), and she is busy removing the husks from the grain. This is done in a tree trunk, hollowed out, and buried partly in the ground. Attached to the trunk is a long pole, with a sort of mallet on the end. At the farther end is a species of lever in which the long pole is fixed. On this the women steps, pulls on a rope fastened to the mallet head, and then quickly steps off it, allowing the mallet to fall into the hollow trunk of the tree, where the millet is placed for shelling. Only very little can be done at one time, and the process is both slow and heavy, and not very satisfactory when it is completed.

We find this little settlement in a great fever of excitement over the

brigands. Ten li across the river they are said to be gathered in great force, and the soldiers of the Mongol Naiman Banner have been ordered out to do them battle. Ch'akantaohai is part of the Aoniuch'i, and the young men of the various settlements have formed themselves into local militia bands, for mutual defence and protection. Twice during the evening these determined-looking young fellows come up on horseback to the hut where we are resting, each man armed with a modern rifle. We hear now the true facts concerning the battle that is said to have taken place between the brigands and the Chinese troops. There has certainly been a meeting, but as soon as firing began, one soldier fell mortally wounded. The rest instantly remembered some other engagement, turned and fled. The commanding officer Fêng was safely settled in a large temple two hundred li from the scene of conflict. After the Chinese troops had left, the young Mongols of the districts, realising that both their homes and their flocks were in danger, themselves went to meet the brigands; and after a long tussle, in which they lost four men, they managed to beat off, the brigands who had now gathered again within ten li of where we sleep that night. I was informed that the conduct of the Chinese troops is usually of this character They are no match for the bandits, who are absolutely fearless, and fight with the desperate courage of condemned men. The only people who can stand up to them are the young fellows of the local militia, who fight because they must, if they are not to lose all that they count worth having. More than this, it is generally reported in these districts that wherever the Chinese soldiers go, they behave themselves no better than the bandits, and their room is infinitely preferable to their company.

Next morning, we continue our march through the woods for another seven miles, skirting the river as we go, and emerging at last into a wide open plain, which proves to be the beginning of what is always described in Chinese as the "ts'ao-ti" (grass-land). We make for the house of a wealthy Mongol at the settlement of Chuch'angailin, where we hope to have our breakfast. This man proves to be a Tama Laoyeh of the Aoniuch'i, and when we reach his house we find that he has been entertaining over-night some ten or twelve Chinese, some of whom are just rising from the "k'ang" as we arrive. They describe themselves as natives of Hailiut'u, who had been on their way to a temple fair and theatre 200 li on the other side of the river, but turned back on learning of the brigands in the way. I note that our host is nowhere to be seen, and on asking for him, am told that he is in one of his tents and afraid to come out. Also I note that there are no women-folk about the place, save one ill-favoured old slave. On asking the reason of this, I am informed that the women had all fled last night on receipt of the news about the bandits. I spend perhaps an hour chatting with the Chinese I have found in the house, at the end of which time they say they must be proceeding on their journey. To my surprise, every man straps over his shoulders a modern five-cartridge magazine rifle, round his waist a well-filled bandolier, mounts a sturdy pony, and then all ride off in the direction from which we have come, like a troop of soldiers. An ugly suspicion flashes across my mind that these

men are not quite so harmless as they seem. They have no sooner gone than our host emerges from his tent, and proves himself a most friendly and affable fellow. And when I am able to quietly interrogate my men, they too confess their suspicions that the Chinese with whom I have talked so long, are nothing more nor less than a company of bandits, who had turned up at this house the previous night, so scaring away the females of the household, and causing the Tama Laoyeh to sulk in his tent. We have no certain proof that our suspicions are correct, but circumstantial evidence could scarcely be more complete. And that they talked away with us, and made no trouble, is but confirmatory of their conduct whenever they meet with foreigners. They rarely interfere with foreign travellers, but reserve all their attentions for the large pawnshops, distilleries, etc., and the wealthy homes where many animals are kept. Up in the regions of which I now write, they confine themselves for the most part to horse-stealing. The day after our meeting with these men, some brigands turned up at a Chinese store across the river, demanded food for themselves and animals, and on leaving, took from the stables the best pony they could find. We heard also of a wealthy Mongol in this district, who within the past five years, has had stolen from him no fewer than four hundred horses.

For some days now we have all been living on "short commons," the men suffering most from the fact that they can get nothing to eat but "ts'aomi.' This small grain is prepared in a very simple way. The boiler is filled with water, into which, when heated to boiling point, the grain is thrown. It swells up instantly, and is immediately removed from the boiler and eaten like porridge. The men found it very unsatisfying over the sand-deserts, and we are all glad of a chance here to purchase a goat for dollar, which is very acceptable as a change of diet.

We start off from Ch'uchangailin at ten o'clock, on what we hope will be the last march by the side of the Laoho. The river spreads out very widely here, and in one place forks out into two streams, which pass on either side of a thickly-wooded island from four to six li long. Beyond this, it sweeps round to the east for some further six li, and then turns in its old direction of north-east. We have about sixty li to do this march, and must therefore keep to the main road, which lies about a mile from the west bank of the river. All about us is the "ts'ao-ti": here and there a Mongol settlement of a couple of huts: at one place a large and well-built Lama temple, the Paiyintalamiao, while every few li are the "Aopao" cairns, (here made of timbers), already described in connection with the Tamingt'a. Approaching the temple just named, two of our mules fall sick, and lie down in the road, due to their having had to do without straw for the last two meals. Our muleteer adopts vigorous measures. Grasping the nose of the dainty chestnut, he works it back and forward with the energy of a steam-mill. That failing, he thrusts a few strong pinches of cayenne pepper, obtained from Marisami, up its nostrils. All is of no avail, and we have simply to unload the two sick mules and leave the muleteer with them at the temple, where a Lama veterinary bleeds them so effectively that before dark they are with us again.

LAMA TEMPLE (PAI YIN TA LA MIAO) NEAR HAILU'IT'U.

HOUSE OF WEALTHY MONGOL ON THE PLAINS.

MOVING A MONGOL TENT IN THE TS'AOTI.

LAMA TOMB AT PAIYINTALAMIAO.

THE OLD "NEPTUNE" AT THE SHIRE MUREN.

It is on this road that I have ocular demonstration of how the Mongols treat their dead. All the way from Chiên-ch'êngying to K'ulukou, a distance of 280 miles, we do not see a single grave. One Buddhist tomb we pass, but that is at the Paiyintalamiao, and is evidently the sarcophagus of some famous priest. In the sand-deserts beyond the Laofu, I noticed some bleached bones on the top of a small hill, and asked our guide what they were. The answer was, "the bones of some ox that has died there." At Hach'ilai, a Chinese village, I had remarked upon the absence of graves, and the young fellow to whom I was speaking replied in an off-hand manner, "Our graves are across the river." A most unlikely thing, where the river is so broad and the crossing so difficult. But here we come across a place where in five minutes I count no fewer than thirteen human skulls lying on the plain, and comparatively near to a Mongol settlement. Some distance off the road I go to inspect a small box some two feet square. On this the dead body is placed in a sitting posture, and left to the dogs and wolves. I can scarcely describe the weird and eerie feeling that comes over me as I look on these skulls and examine the burial box. I very much fear also that the Chinese in these regions have imitated their Mongol neighbours in this respect. Else, why no graves?

We reach in the evening a large Chinese store standing alone on the plain, which is a branch of a large business in K'ulukou, known by its sign of T'ienhoulung, (Substantial and Wealthy as Heaven, a somewhat ambitious title for a store.) Here we find some fifteen young business men, all Chinese, who have never heard that the war between Japan and Russia is ended, but who are content to remain here year after year, and wax fat and wealthy on their Mongol customers. They sell almost everything that can be needed, principally harness, cloth, wine, tobacco, and among their goods I see American cottons and Peacock cigarettes. Kerosene oil is not yet found there, the ancient butter-lamp being still in universal use. The store is visited daily by Mongols, among whom the ladies are conspicuous. The Chinese, of-course, all speak Mongolian, and seem to be on excellent terms of friendship with all their clients. Ladies the world over dearly love a bargain, and it is interesting to learn that the Mongol women are just as fond of turning over the cloths and ribbons in this remote store on the plains, as are their English sisters of visiting the fashionable establishments of Bond Street. The system here is that food is provided free for all intending purchasers. There is little or no exchange of actual money. Accounts are made up every autumn, and paid for in horses, oxen and sheep. Nor need it be said that the prices are not clearance-sale prices. A large stud of ponies is kept on the premises, and the young assistants have each their several rounds, whither they go with samples of goods much in the style of packmen at home.

Here we stay over Sunday, May 20, and mounting the roof of the principal room, I can make out with my glass a lonely mountain away to the West to which they give the name of T'ienshan (Heaven's Hill). It stands quite solitary on the plain and is some forty miles from where I see it. On Monday, May 21, we set out at eight o'clock to find the junction of the Shiramuren with

the Laoho. (Shiramuren is Mongolian for Huangho, or Yellow River). Ten li from the store is the Chinese settlement of Hailiut'u (Earth left by Sea). We are informed that the confluence will be found along the river-bed of a small river not more than forty yards wide. A little to the West in this bed is a pool of water, but where we pass, though the ground is soft and sticky, as of recent water, there is actually no water there. A momentary question arises in my mind as to whether this can be the bed of the Shiramuren, but al prior information I have had represents that river as a broad and strong-flowing stream, so I set this down as a branch of the main stream, and continue our tramp N.E. For about thirty li we tramp, but there is absolutely nothing like another river, and we feel both bewildered and baffled. At length we meet an old man, with a long tridont in his hand, with which he has been spearing fish, and from him learn that the dry bed we have passed over is actually the Shiramuren, and that, however far we may follow the river, we shall meet no other confluence until we are in Manchuria itself. Much puzzled, and considerably disappointed and doubtful, we turn back to the dry bed we have passed, I take there some pictures of the actual scene, as also one of old "Neptune," and then we hie our way back to the village of Hailiut'u, to have the old man's tale confirmed. I make very careful enquiries, and as the matter is so important here transcribe from my diary, written up on the spot, the following notes:—

1.—The dried-up stream is the Shiramuren itself, and there is no other stream of that name any further north than we now are.

2.—Forty li west of this village, the Shiramuren forks off, the northern stream receiving the name of T'aikanho, and emptying itself into a "p'ao-tzu" (marsh, if small; lake, if large) over 100 li north of here.

3.—There is water flowing into the Laoho from this Shiramuren stream only in the spring of each year, immediately after the frost thaws. To-day is the 28th of the 4th moon. (May 21). The natives assure me that on the 18th and 19th (ten days ago) there was water in the stream flowing into the Laoho, of sufficient quantity to compel them to wade across with shoes and socks off.

4.—Should there be specially heavy rains in the late summer, then again there will be water in the Shiramuren, but the regular thing is as stated in No. 3.

5.—The natives know of no other river within reasonable distance of this, that flows into the Laoho. Indeed they say there are none till it reaches Manchuria, though there are lots of "p'ao-tzu" in the district north of here, which become simple marshes.

6.—Boats they say cannot get up as far as Chengchiat'un. The highest point they reach is Hsinch'eng.

The conclusion of the whole matter seems to be that if the Shiramuren is as large as shown in the photos, in the Geographical Journal (Vol. XXXV1, No 4, p. 425), then it loses much water in its progress to the Laoho. its last loss being in the T'aikanho. We have reached the actual point of junction, and can to-morrow cross the river to go towards K'ulukou, though the most satisfactory thing, had it been possible, would have been to follow the Liaoho all the way from this point till it completes its course in the sea at Yingkou."

To these notes may be added the further fact that the river (from this point known as the Hsi, or Western, Liaoho) flows steadily N.E. ; -42° being my prismatic reading,—the natives say, for a distance of 200 li, (70 miles), before it touches its most northern point. Such are the actual facts gleaned in my visit to the junction of these two rivers. The Shiramuren forms the official boundary of Outer Chihli and Mongolia. North of the river is Mongol territory. South of it is Chihli, Hailiut'u being in the Ch'ih fêng district. While East of the Laoho you are in the jurisdiction of Chienf'inghsien. I heard of a young Russian officer who in 1904, spent ten days at the store of Tienhoulung, but who was compelled to decamp when it was reported that the bandits were coming for him. Apart from him, I could learn of no other foreigner who had been there before the place was visited by Marisami and myself.

Hailiut'u is a purely Chinese settlement of about fifty families. Like their Mongol neighbours, they are all engaged in pastoral, not agricultural pursuits, and have their flocks of horses, sheep and oxen feeding on the plain all round them. The banks of the Shiramuren are lined with tall willow-trees, but everywhere else the land is pasture only, and the outlook is flat and monotonous in the extreme. From here to the central settlement of the Barin tribe is some 700 li, and the land is said to be of the same kind all the way, though the hamlets become fewer and more distant from each other the further you go north.

Connected with Hailiut'u is an interesting tradition of the famous Emperor, K'ang Hsi. It is reported that on one occasion he arrived at this place—there was then no village near—and wished to cross the river into the territory of the Naiman Banner. Unfortunately for his desires, the river was then swollen to abnormal size, and any attempt to ford in the ordinary way was likely to be fraught with much danger. Among the few men who accompanied the Emperor was a native of Yichou near Chinchoufu, whose name was Ma. What he did tradition has taken care not to tell. But in some way or other he so managed matters that His Majesty was speedily in safety on the other side. So pleased was the great K'ang Hsi with the man, that he there and then conferred on him a yellow jacket, presented him with a staff he carried in his hand, gave him permission to choose for himself as much land as he wished, and decreed that so long as the yellow jacket and Imperial staff remained in the family of Ma, he and his descendants in perpetuity should live upon their land free from all taxes, as from all rents that might be demanded by the Mongol owners. Ma at once chose the present site of Hailiut'u, with the broad pastures attaching to it, and settled his own family in its various branches on the land. After some years, however, his old grandfather died, and wishing to show him as much honour as was possible, Mr. Ma dressed the corpse up in the yellow jacket, placed the Emperor's staff in the dead man's hand, and buried them all together in the coffin he had prepared. Since which time, the clan has had to pay all its rates and taxes, and its rents to the Mongols just like ordinary mortals, and is subject to all the inconveniences, without any corresponding advantages, of being under the

nominal jurisdiction of the Ch'infêng official. No Ch'ihfêng mandarin has, however, been there, and all their appeals and complaints are of no avail before his honour. Such is the tale as told to me at Hailiut'u, and as if to confirm it, I am told that almost every family answers to the name of Ma, declares itself as having come originally from Yichou, and when we leave on the morning of Tuesday, May 22, sure enough our Mongol-speaking and Mongol-clothed Chinese guide answers to the name of Ma, and claims descent from the illustrious, though foolish man, who once gained Imperial favour, and then lightly buried it in the ground.

SOUTH-EAST TO K'ULUKOU.*

On the morning of Tuesday, May 22, we leave the village of Hailiut'u, and make straight for the Laoho ford, where we must cross to find the road that leads South-east to K'ulukou. There are two roads between these two places, the nearer one leading over the sand-hills; the other, which lies further to the east, and which we decide to take, being the great road that connects Lamamiao, or Dolonor, with Mukden, via., Wutanch'eng and K'ulukou. For three weeks we have been in daily touch with the Laoho, and not one of us is sorry at the prospect of bidding it farewell this morning. But we are destined to a final experience of it that stamps it indelibly on our memories, and that we are likely to recall whenever the name of the Old River is mentioned in our hearing.

Arrived at the river (the ford is four miles from the village,) our guide and our muleteer must needs doff shoes and stockings and wade across. I, of course, ride my pony, my servant rides his mule, the little donkey follows close behind me, while Marisami, Wêng and Yuan Min must wait until we can send animals back for them. At 7.14 we begin the ford. I cross without a moment's stop, and my watch is pointing to 7.34 as Hansl steps on dry land at the other side. The crossing has taken exactly twenty minutes, from which fact the width of the river at this point may be gauged. Of course, it is not all water, but there are several streams sufficiently deep to prevent anyone crossing without wading.

Just as we are in the middle of the main stream, Shu Fêng and I, riding behind, observe that the load of the little chestnut mule is all awry. We call out to the muleteer. At once, he drops the halter rope of the mule he is leading, and runs to set the load straight. The leading mule turns to follow him, steps somehow into deeper water, makes no attempt to recover its footing, but lies down in the stream, its head only projecting above the water, and my portmanteau and food-box are all but submerged. To complete the fiasco, the load of the chestnut mule rolls off into the river, and in less time than it takes to tell it, the bedding of the three Chinese boys is soaked through, and as we find later, much of their clothing spoiled. I at once seize the halter rope of the second mule, and lead the three across without having stopped. But loud are the lamentations of Shu Fêng, when he unpacks his bed-bag, and sees the destruction of his silks and satins.

This incident delays us on the east bank of the river an hour and a half, and deprives me for the rest of the way of butter, sugar, etc., for the Laoho is chocolate in colour, and muddy in composition. Across the river, we

* The Chinese characters for this place are 嘯嘯溝 (commonly, Treasury Valley).

change guides having now entered, the Naimanch'i. Our senior guide to Wapu is a garrulous old Mongol, from whom I learn a good deal concerning their manners and customs. He was originally of the Aohanch'i, but in 1895, when the Chinese in the region of Hata rose up and slew several thousands of the Mongols, he fled from his home 500 li west, and settled where we find him at Aoliuchu. He tells me that the "t'aichi" (Huc calls them "taitsi") are the lineal descendants of the supporters of the Yuen dynasty (A.D. 1260 1368), and are all born into the fourth rank of officialdom. No bestowal of this rank is required by the Emperor, each man, on attaining the age of eighteen, being entitled to assume his rank, and wear a blue button. Further, it is from him I learn that the Mongol princes will not permit their subjects to engage in trade themselves: that, so far as agriculture is concerned, a man may plant a small plot with "ts'ao mi" for two successive years, after which he must abandon it for another piece. The pastoral life alone must be theirs. As to marriage customs, the poorer people can sell a daughter for two or three animals, which in turn are sold to provide clothing and jewellery for the bride, all of which she takes with her to her new home. He confirms what I have already stated about the exposure of their dead, but states that on occasion the wealthier people practise cremation. "That, however," he adds, "means inviting the Lamas to read prayers, conduct elaborate ceremonies, and incur much expense." Quite evidently he prefers the cheaper way.

At Wapu we find a rough and tumble soda manufactory, conducted by Chinese from K'ulukou. There are forty or more workmen connected with the place. All day long they are in the plain, piling up the earth in which the soda is found, in mounds like Chinese graves. They have only begun work for the season two days before our visit, and they were to go on preparing two months more. In July, they start their furnaces and boilers, by a species of condensation convert their soda into large blocks, and before the winter, cart it away to K'ulukou, whence it is dispatched for sale within the Great Wall. It is there used, so I understand, in the manufacture of dyes.

K'ulukou is one hundred miles from Hailiut'u, and the first seventy miles lie over a tolerably good road. On either side is the plain, on which there are hundreds upon hundreds of animals feeding day by day. No one seems to be in charge of them: they roam away in groups from their respective homes in the mornings, cropping the grass where fancy pleases, and wandering home each evening with unerring instinct. Horses, oxen, sheep and goats abound, but I do not remember having seen either a mule or a donkey. Near Wapu are several large sheets of water, one being fully two miles long and half-a-mile wide. Beyond the plain on either side, stretching away west to the Laoho, and east to the borders of Manchuria, are those interminable sand-hills, which converge on our road again some thirty miles from K'ulukou, but cease two miles beyond Yangshumu.

All the way along this road we hear rumours of the brigands, and have for our guide on one occasion a poor fellow from Kaoshut'ai, who four days before, had had a visit from twenty-seven bandits. They had helped themselves to what

they wanted, which included nine of the best horses he owned out of a stud of fifteen. And when we call we find his elder brother laid on the "k'ang," dying so it seems to me, of a broken heart by reason of their losses.

Once on the way we are forced to lunch in the open air. That day we travel twenty-three miles, and meet not a hut nor a tent of any description. All along the road are the ashes of camp-fires, left by travellers of former days, and little holes which have been dug to provide a scanty supply of water for themselves and their animals. We suffer intensely from thirst this day, it is amusing, though really very pitiable, to see how the men race to the little wayside holes in ope of finding water, and scrape up a few drops in their tins to moisten their lips. No company should venture on this route in future, without at least five days' water and provisions, as well as a tent in which, as need arises, they can camp out

Twice during the march I sleep in the open air, and the other nights in huts open to every wind that blows. At Yalasenta, we are alarmed by a great commotion of galloping horses, and look out to see a dozen horsemen ride at a furious pace into the settlement and make direct for the well. Brigands, again I surmise, and quietly watch without showing myself. But presently I learn that these are not brigands, but sportsmen. Every month for three stated days, the Mongols give themselves up to hunting, and assemble at appointed rendezvous in large numbers for the chase. With the men who ride into Yalasenta are eight or ten dogs, evidently well trained, for they stick close by the horses wherever they go, and loftily ignore the baring and yelping of the village curs. These hunting dogs are big and thin and bony, and save that they have long hair, somewhat resemble our own greyhounds, being very fleet of foot. At this meet there are no fewer than about one thousand men. We se them at their sport next day. They hunt the hares on horseback, carrying in their right hand a short stick two feet long, having one end curved and heavily weighted with lead. This weapon they throw at the fleeting hare with unerring aim as they gallop along, and rarely fail to bring "Puss" down. They get a lot of fun out of their sport, but it looks particularly childish to see half-a-dozen big fellows on horseback chasing a frightened hare across the plains, while posted on every hill and path are two or three others to prevent her escaping. I manage at one house, where we stop for dinner, to buy one of the hunting sticks, for the large sum of ten cents.

At Yalasenta also we meet with a curious Mongol custom with respect to provisions for the road. Our muleteer wants to buy corn for his mules, but the housewife will not sell to him until assured that he will use some of it to feed his animals next morning before he leaves. It seems that no Mongol ever carries with him more than three days' provisions at a time, and our lady host wants to be satisfied that we are not going to violate this rule. Even after this, when she has measured out his corn, she takes a few fingers-full and puts it back into her stock. The reason for this I learn is, "Oh, we always do that in Mongolia.'

Game abounds in this region, and one day Marisami in seven shots gets eight birds, among them two pheasants

and a fine duck. Here we are constantly followed by a bird I do not know, which flies about our heads as we march, and utters a most piteous cry. The only name I can get for him is "Yehchingti" (Night-watchman), this name being given because at nights he gives voice whenever he hears a footstep. He has a dark brown coat, white neck and breast, a tuft on his head which he closes as he flies, a slender beak and long legs. He must belong to the plover or "stilt" species: he makes fine feeding, for I sampled him with my gun more than once, and he is a very common sight on the way to K'ulukou.

At Yangshumu and Shihpei, both Mongol villages, we come on two small streams flowing east, which are said to enter the Liaoho. Where we pass them, they bear the names of the villages near them. Here we are among the Mongols of the K'uluch'i, a peculiarity of which banner is married Lamas. At one house we stop in, the master, an old Lama, owns two wives and seven or eight children, and—I am glad to add—is of a more sensible and manly type than Lamas we met elsewere. In his house I unwittingly manage to offend his principal wife. Every Mongol home contains a "huo-p'ên" (fire-bowl), usually attached to the "k'ang," where a "k'ang" is found. Here the "k'ang" runs round three sides of a large room, and the stand containing the fire-bowl coming into proximity to my feet, I stretch out my legs in "John Bull" comfort, and rest there. Presently the old lady comes in to add some embers to the smouldering fire, and seeing the position of my feet, she, speaking no Chinese, angrily takes her small fire-shovel and gives my feet a sufficiently-emphatic knock to make me understand she wants them removed I, of course, at once comply with her unspoken request, and later on, ask her husband in what way I have offended. He is very decent about my error, says he knew I had done it in ignorance. but that I have violated one of their strictest canons of reverence, by treating so cavalierly the "Huo-shen" Fire-god). "And do you really believe, there is a god in the fire?" I ask. "Most decidedly there is a god there," is his reply, "and that is why our fires are never allowed to go out." Future travellers in Mongolia will do well therefore to bear in mind two maxims. First, "Beware of the dog!" Secondly, "Dont' insult the fire-god!"

On Saturday, May 26, we reach K'ulukou, perhaps the quaintest town to be seen in North China. Ninety miles from Hsinminfu, and 130 miles from Mukden, it is built on the sloping sides of the low hills which encircle it, and through the principal street runs a gully from forty to sixty feet deep. Through this a small stream flows east, and it is crossed by rude and crazy-looking bridges. The streets lie east and west. At the west end, is a fine temple dedicated to the god of war, in which is a company of cavalry belonging to General Ma Yu-kun. Away to the east, amid a cluster of trees, stand the temples and the monastery which has given the town its name. The town is said to contain over 2,000 families, and 300 business houses, with several fine and commodious inns. One feature of the inns is that there is usually a thoroughfare through their compounds from one street to another, which are constantly used by pedestrians and mounted men. There are no large shops or stores in the place and it is

difficult to believe that so much business is done until you learn that one courtyard may contain from four to ten different business establishments. A great trade is done in skins, which are sent from here to Mukden, thence to Newchwang, while in the seventh moon of each year a great horse-fair is held, when the animals that have come down from the plains are sold to the dealers that go there specially for this market. At the time of our visit, there are scarcely any ponies for sale, and owing to the war in the East, prices have been run up so seriously that from T'atzukou to Ch'ao-yang, and all the way round, horses and oxen were being sold for much higher prices than were being asked in Tientsin.

We have not been long in the inn at K'ulukou (the natives slur the name into K'ulierh), before an old and noisy Lama comes to say we are occupying rooms that he has reserved for some officers of Prince Su's suite. As I have satisfied myself before renting the rooms that what has been reserved for these officials is the suite of rooms in the front compound, I politely but firmly decline to fall in with the old man's wishes to move to another inn, especially as his guests have not yet arrived, and he has to confess that no certain day has been fixed. My passport comes in very handy here, though he cannot read a character on it, and when he sees he cannot bluff me into compliance with his desires, he goes off in high dudgeon, and spends the next two days seated in the shop at the front of the inn, watching me with unkindly eyes as I go to and fro in the streets.

The most interesting incident of my stay here is my visit to the Lama monastery, and my meeting with the young Lama Prince who reigns there. The grounds of the monastery are very extensive, and we have to ride a long distance before we are required to dismount. We are first received by a young Lama, who acts as secretary to the Prince, and then led through two courtyards before we reach the Prince's private apartments. The Prince is of Tibetan extraction, though he himself has never been any nearer to Tibet then Kansu, and tells me that when he does go, he proposes to go round by India. He is just thirty years of age, has the thin lips and the high cheek-bones of the Tibetan, and is an intelligent and interesting man. He has the reputation of being a "Huo Fo" (Living Buddha), before whom all who visit him are required to kowtow. Not being prepared to yield him that honour, and not accustomed to meet with so much "incarnate sainthood," I am somewhat at a loss how to meet him. He very considerately solves the difficulty by himself coming out of his apartments to meet me, and greeting me with the customary official salutation of bending the right knee, and dropping the right hand. I instantly follow suit, and that difficulty is over. His rooms are in splendid order and cleanliness, and very artistically decorated, though the elaborate blue and gold would scarcely commend itself to foreign taste. The special feature of his reception room is the number of clocks he possesses. Four are hanging on the walls; eight arranged on the table behind the dais; and—not one of them is going! They are mostly of gaudy Japanese designs, bought, so he says, in Mukden, and used merely for decoration.

The Prince himself is dressed in rich

silk garments of a deep purple colour, edged with gilt braid, his hat being of the same material. He speaks beautiful Chinese, but does not know a character, and I have to translate for him the characters descriptive of myself on my "t'ieh-tzu" (written document used in visiting officials). He writes, however, both Mongolian and Tibetan, in a clear strong hand. We converse together for some time in a free and easy manner. He lights a cigarette and offers it first to me, and then to Mr. Wêng, but as neither of us indulge, smokes it himself. We discuss Mongolia, Manchuria and Tibet, and the refractory Dalai Lama at the Tak'ulün (Urga). He produces or my inspection, and his own information, a little foreign-made girl doll, destitute of attire save one article of underclothing, and still bearing the ticket which shows that it was bought for ninety cents. This, he says, was given to him by a foreigner who visited him six months before, a man who wore Chinese clothes, but who could not speak the Chinese language, and one felt a little impatient with any foreigner who could seek in this way to fool an intelligent gentleman, such as the Prince of K'ulukou is. He permits me to photograph him, and then asks me to take a picture of his favourite riding-horse, a lovely creature with a shining coat like black satin. And later, by his orders, I am shown all over his cathedral temple, a most beautiful place indeed. The principal hall is fully 100 feet square, with massive stone pillars decorated in gold and red. There are six separate aisles with carpeted seats raised an inch or two above the floor, where the Lamas sit for their religious exercises, while in the centre is the elevated throne of the Prince, the Living Buddha. Further back, are gods and beautifully-painted pictures, all the work of their own Lamas. There are also several sets of shelves with Buddhist Scriptures wrapped up in yellow cloth, and behind the throne, an altar with a lighted lamp that is never allowed to be extinguished. Upstairs is a second hall, with a gallery from which you can look down ino the lower hall. Here too are eight golden Buddhas, recently obtained from Lamamiao to replace what were lost in 1900, when, according to what I am told by the secretary, Russian troops arrived from Hsinmint'ün, and stripped the temple bare of all its possessions.

From the Prince I learn the following interesting tradition of the foundation of the monastery he rules over, and which now contains over 1,000 Lamas. Once upon a time, no earlier than at the beginning of the present dynasty, there was here large cave inhabited by some ferocious animal that caused the death of no one knows how many people. Eventually, one of the present Prince's ancestors, by his bravery and strategy, slew this dreaded animal, and so delivered the people from its terrors. It has quite a "St. George and the Dragon" flavour, as the Prince tells the tale. As a reward, the Emperor of that day ordered the erection of this monastery, and made the hero the first Prince of the K'uluch'i. The cave where the animal is said to have dwelt is underneath the throne of the Prince in the principal hall of the temple.

More recently, K'ulukou was the scene of a sanguinary conflict of another kind, that so far as I know, has never been reported in the papers. A Chinese named Wang Fu-ma, a native of

TIBETAN LAMA PRINCE AT K'ULUKON.

LAMA TEMPLE AT K'ULUKON.

Shantung, had taken service with the Russians, and obtained official rank: the report says he was a Major. During the late war, he was sent to K'ulukou to purchase animals for the troops, and in conjunction with a native of the place, a Mahommedan also named Wang, had bought 3,000 head of oxen. The Mahommedan, wishing to make profit out of both parties, sent a message to a notorious brigand chief named Chin Shou-shan, who was in the pay of the Japanese. On the morning of the third day of the sixth moon (July 15th, 1904), Chin Shou-shan and his men suddenly swooped down, captured and slew after some sort of a fight, Wang Fu-ma and one of his servants. Chin Shou-shan lost two men in the affray, but took away a portion of the spoil. The remainder of the cattle were confiscated by the Mahommedan, but some days later Chin Shou-shan returned, decapitated the traitor, and so terrorised the people that to this day, none dare claim relationship with the dead Mahommedan. Later, a Japanese officer and the Ch'aoyang official came to investigate the affair, with what result no one knows. Wang Fu-ma and the other men killed with him are buried a little north of the town at a place called Hei Chih-yao, while report goes that Chin Shou-shan is now at Yingk'ou, in command of troops under the Japanese, known as the Meng Chih-t'ui.

Just before my visit, a party of three Japanese had visited the town with a gambling table, staying for three weeks, and bleeding the unsophisticated native. At Hatakai, ninety li east, whither they went after leaving K'ulukou, a young Mongol soldier had spun the needle and won what was said to be a valuable gold watch. The Japanese in charge were very unwilling to give the man his prize, and a dispute took place, in the course of which one of the Japanese drew a revolver, and shot the Mongol dead. On hearing the news, his comrades took the law into their own hands, went in a body and killed the Japanese who had shot the soldier, took the other two prisoners, and handed them over to the nearest Japanese officer, by whom they were escorted to Mukden for trial.

We found—and with such occurences as this it is not surprising—that the Japanese are anything but popular in the district. And it does seem a pity that the good name of a people so capable and so brave should be made so obnoxious by the promiscuous expeditions and blackguardly behaviour of their low-class nationals.

Our innkeeper at K'ulokou makes an abortive attempt to "squeeze" us. He wants to charge us at the rate of fifty cents per day per man for the use of rooms, besides extravagant charges for straw and corn. We do not dispute his bills, but request that a detailed account shall be supplied to us, with a receipt for all we pay. Our reason for this, we tell him, is that since the charges are so much higher than we have found elsewhere, we shall have to make enquiries on reaching Ch'aoyangfu. Without a moment's hesitation, our bills are reduced by one-third, and I pass on my experience to fellow-travellers who may occasionally meet with innkeepers who are too apt to regard us foreigners as a parcel of "li-pa-t'ou" (greenhorns). It may here be added that K'ulukou is under the jurisdiction of the new district of Fuhsinghsien, set up at Wuerh-t'upan.

TO C'HAOYANG AND CHINCHOUFU.

From K'ulukou to Ch'aoyangfu is exactly 132 miles; from the latter place to Chinchoufu, where our tramp is to finish, is sixty-four miles. So that we have still some ten days' tramping from the time we leave K'ulukou, till we exchange the road for the train, and whirl through the air at express speed to Shanhaikuan. Declining the Prince's courteous offer of an escort, we start from his town on the morning of Tuesday, May 29, going south-west along a road that seems the acme of perfection, after our rough experiences over sand-deserts and plain. We have now lost all traces of the "ts'aoti," and are again in what to us are civilised regions. The sight of the hills in the distances, and of cultivated fields along the road, make us all feel as if we were already at home, and we form a happy and light-hearted group as we trudge along.

Though we have got past the "ts'aoti" proper, we are still "on tramp among the Mongols," and continue so until we reach Ch'aoyangfu. But there is a great difference between the Mongols of this region as compared with those north of K'ulukou. Here we find but very few who cannot speak Chinese; there a Chinese speaker had been a rare exception. Our tramp is correspondingly easier now, and in one sense, more interesting. Fearing that at some places we should find difficulty in securing accommodation, the Lama Prince had kindly furnished me with two of his cards, one in Mongolian and one in Chinese, and had authorised me to use either or both as an "open sesame." This proves of advantage at the very first stop we make, a small Mongol village without an inn named Hatayingtzu. Mention of the Prince's name, without production of the cards, brings us at once all we need. In this small village, we find no fewer than from fifty to sixty married Lamas, who are neither attached to temples, nor engaged in agriculture, but on their own confession, idle round day in and day out. The house in which we have our meal is owned by a Lama, who does nothing but hang round, while his two sons labour in the fields for some of the neighbours, and so earn enough to keep the house going. "They toil not, neither do they spin," and yet, they (the Lamas), eat and drink of the best there is, and are clothed in robes that might, on occasion, have not even been espised by Solomon.

We are making first for Peitzufu, and from there hope to pay a visit to a gold-mine with a local reputation, called Chinch'angkouliang. But we find that the name Peitzufu (literally, Earl's Palace), is used to describe at least four places in that region, and the one we eventually reach proves to be some sixty miles from that we set out to find. For instance, we pass within one mile of Halahapeitzufu (twenty-five miles from K'ulukou); we visit Heich'êngtzupeitzufu (eighty-five miles

further on); while we hear of a Mêngkouchenpeitzufu, east of the road we travel; and yet another place of the same name, west of our present route, and 180 li north-west of Ch'aoyangfu.

The country from K'ulukou to Ch'aoyang is for the most part, an open, rolling country, providing ample land for cultivation, and not a little ground on which we frequently see herds of animals feeding. There are no towns of any importance between the two places, but at a small market village named Fuhsingti we find a company (200?) of cavalry, belonging to General Ma's army, stationed there to keep in check the brigands that here abound. In almost every village we stop at, we hear of the bad behaviour of these troops. How far the tales we hear are true, we do not seek to prove, but there is "never smoke without a fire," and their conduct at least needs scrutinising. Considering that the Commander-in-Chief is about 150 miles from these men, it is not surprising that they live up to the old proverb, "Yen Wang pu tsai chia; hsiao kuei wan wan shua"—a Chinese rendering of "When the cat's away, the mice will play." The town of Wuerht'upan, now the seat of government for the new district of Fuhsing, lies some seventy li north-west of the village of Fuhsingti. It is not worth our going out of our way to visit, but we learn that it is simply a large market village, which has secured the dignity of a "hsien" because K'ulukou, the busiest and most likely town in the district, is governed largely by the Tibetan Prince, and the general opinion obtains that to have settled a Chinese official there, would have led to friction between the two sets of authorities.

We cross several easy passes on the route, the highest being 1,500 ft., though to the east of us lies a range of high hills that mark the borders of the Manchurian provinces, and run up in some cases to 5,000 and 6,000 feet. A very fine Lama Temple is the Kêkê miao, were over 300 Lamas are in residence. The main hall stands well back in beautiful and extensive grounds, having a wide verandah running round three sides of it. Another fine Lama temple is that at the village of Ch'ich'ilitai, whose special feature is a massive stone Buddha before the main entrance, with a blue face, and its body painted most grotesquely, one-halt blue, the other half, a brilliant red. Both these temples are in the Toumeich'i, and the Lamas of this order wear no trousers, and have only sleeveless coats. Suspended from the waist is a long and clumsy brown garment that goes down to the feet like a petticoat, while thrown loosely over the shoulders is a brown scarf, like a Roman toga, or a Highland sash. On asking how men so clad endure the intense cold of the winter, the answer I get is, "Oh they don't go out much in the winter. In the morning they rush to the temple for devotions; that over, they rush back to their rooms, and remain for the rest of the day on the warm k'ang."

At Kuanyingtzu we hear of four Japanese who had passed through from the east on May 14. None of them could speak Chinese. Their baggage, such as it was, was carried on a pole by a Mongol coolie they had hired. They themselves were walking, and had no animals with them. They communicated with the innkeeper in writing, and to him explained that the eldest of the party was an Army Colonel (T'ungling,) and that they were going

to Peking on "kung ssu" (official business). Needless to say, the Chinese innkeeper was much surprised that a "t'ungling" should be travelling on foot, in such a humble manner as his visitors.

Heich'êngtzupeitzufu is the seat of the Mongol Earl of Toumei. It is a very ordinary village with a dilapidated mud-wall surrounding what is said to be the Earl's Palace, which stands some two li from the small inn we put up at. One feels as if the English explanation of the character 府 "Fu," as applied to these residences of Mongol Princes, Dukes and Earls, needs some revising. It is a misnomer to dub them palaces, except it be always understood as mere "haohua" (good words). Anything less like the Occidental idea of "palace" it would be difficult to imagine. At this place, there are a number of tumble-down houses that are said to be the "fu," but their appearance betokens serious neglect. That is explained to me by the fact that the young Earl of Toumei (the people call him Prince), has for nine years been an "absentee landlord," and has only returned to his "palace" two days before our visit. He holds an office in the Imperial Household at Peking, and either his duties there, or the gaieties of the capital have kept him away all these years, while his ancestral home has been allowed to fall into wreck and ruin. Under the circumstances, I deny myself the pleasure of calling upon him, and as for photography, his old buildings are not worth wasting a film over.

Approaching Ch'aoyangfu, we hear of a donkey train being stopped by brigands, and robbed of $400. This happens at Lochiakou, where a post of four soldiers is to be found, and only twenty-five li from Mêngkouyingtzu, where General Ma has a company of cavalry. Even so, do they protect the populace!

Ch'aoyang seems to lie in the centre of an immense coalfield. Within two days' march of the city, we pass several small and primitive mines, while in the city itself is a government office for the regulation of the trade. Regulation, here as at ata, consists in the collection of dues arbitrarily and recently imposed on the people who work the mines, a duty for which Chinese officials and their satellites have a peculiar penchant.

Ch'aoyang, or Santsot'a, as it is locally called, is a large and busy town. It is neither so large nor so busy as Hata, but having much narrower streets, to the casual visitor it looks much more lively and brisk. Here, as at K'ulukou, may be found several business houses clustered in one large compound, while on the main street is a great number of large and elaborately-decorated shops, where all kinds of goods, native and foreign, are displayed for sale.

The special items for the sightseer are the remaining pagodas and the fine Lama temple of the Toumeich'i. The pagodas are square, and not, as is usual, octagonal. Tradition ascribes them to the T'ang dynasty, and they are both some 400 feet high, towering up, and forming conspicuous landmarks for miles round. They are both sadly the worse for wear and give you the uneasy feeling that some day they will follow the example of their third brother, and come toppling down upon the people and houses gathered round their feet. The Lama temple is a particularly fine structure, with four or five separate compounds, and a great many accessory

temples and buildings. The main hall is always kept barred against outsiders (the Lamas do not care to have their temples desecrated by the promiscuous mob), so we make no attempt to get inside, but content ourselves with "snaps" at the exterior; the quaint architecture, especially fine on the roofs, lending itself admirably to the camera.

In this city are not only soldiers belonging to General Ma, but also a company of the old style under one General Yang. Also there are both Roman Catholic and Protestant Missions; the former organized since Boxer days, the latter worked by the Irish Presbyterian Mission, which in 1901 took over from the London Missionary Society, the work originated by James Gilmour.

On one of the highest hills east of Ch'aoyang, and within easy distance of the city stands a small pagoda. It is also said that there are the remains of a city wall on these hills which once enclosed the residence of a noted rebel camp. The tale, as I hear it, is as follows:—

One Ts'ai Pao-shan, a native of Ts'ai-chuang, in the Ch'anglihsien, some 25 miles from Yungp'ingfu, a man who had won the first literary degree of "hsiu-ts'ai" (B.A.) and had a withered arm, was falsely accused of taking part in a robbery near his own home. This was in the ninth year of Hsiên Fêng (1860), and he was then thrown into prison, first at Ch'angli and then at Yungp'ing-fu. In 1861 he was rescued from prison by the men who had got him into this scrape, and with them fled beyond the Great Wall to Ch'aoyang. Here he attached himself to a noted robber chief named Li Fêng-k'uei, who, declaring himself a king, and appointing Ts'ai Pao-shan his Prime Minister, raised the standard of rebellion against Hsiên Fêng. They slew the Ch'aoyang official, raised a considerable force of disaffected men, and when, in consequence of the British and French march on Peking, the Emperor Hsiên Fêng fled to Jehol, they led their army of several thousand men (Chinese figures are always large) to that city, intending to slay he unhappy monarch and usurp the kingdom for Li Fêng-k'uei. Their intentions were thwarted by the Haraschin Mongol Prince and the Tartar General of Mukden, who defeating the rebel forces, and captured and as promptly decapitated Li Fêng-k'uei. Ts'ai Pao-shan, his chief having fallen, retired to his native homs and became a respectable man once again. But when T'ung Chih had ascended the throne in Peking, his ambitions stirred within him to proceed to the capital and purchase rank for himself. There he was recognized as an old rebel leader and paid the penalty for his misdeeds by execution in Peking. His son and grandson are still alive; the latter being himself a B.A., and resident in his native village of Ts'aichuang.

There is no need that I should dwell in detail on the road from Ch'aoyang to Chinchoufu. Its best friend would not accuse that road of being a good one. Where it is not shingly, it is sandy; where it is not sandy, it is broken and rough; where it is not broken, there are stony passes to climb, which though not specially high, yet have to be got over by yourselves and your followers. The hills so surround Ch'aoyang that though the road to Chinchou lies south-east, you must go out of the north gate to find it. Seven miles from the former city, at

Ch'angpaoyi gtze, the Talingho must be forded or crossed on a small ferry. The road from here to Mangniuyingtze runs alongside of this river, that is, a distance of about seven miles. At Mangniuyingtze the river takes a wide sweep away to the N.E., in a direction of 43°, and the traveller to Chinchou sees it no more on this trip. It eventually flows past the city of Yichou, and finds its way to the sea some twenty li east of Chinchoufu.

The first day out from Ch'aoyang is quite the hottest day of our tramp. At eleven o'clock, my thermometer registers 109° in the sun. And in the afternoon the wind is like a continuous blast from a furnace. This same afternoon we have an entirely fresh experience, being immersed in a whirlwind for a few seconds. We are riding along, I close in behind the mules, a soldier thrust upon us as an escort, behind me, Wêng on the little donkey behind him. Suddenly, none of us having observed its coming, a fierce whirlwind is upon us. It quite misses the mules and catches only the three of us just named. I am almost lifted clean out of the saddle; the soldier's horse is carried off the road, partly by fright, and he only controls it with great difficulty. To speak is impossible, while the wind, the dust, and the minute stones that sting our faces are terrific in their force. It lasts only for a second or two, and then we see it careering away from us across the fields, but it gives me one of the queerest sensations that I have ever known.

Thirty miles from Chinchoufu we pass a small hamlet named Shuichütze (Customs Office). Alongside of it runs a small serpent-like mound of stones and earth not a foot out of the ground. This is the Ancient Palisade, or as the Chinese term it, "Piench'iang," the Outer Great Wall, in contradistinction from the "Wanlichiengch'êng" (the Great Wall proper). This outer wall marks now, as in olden days, the boundaries of Chihli and the Manchurian province of Fêngt'ien. The remarkable fact about this palisade is, that East of it the natives describe as "Pienli" (within the Palisade); while "Pienwai" (outside the Palisade), is used to designate the territory to the West. That is to say, on the Manchurian side you are "within"; on the Chinese side you are "without." It need not be said that this is entirely different from the manner in which the Great Wall proper is spoken of. Here all south of the Wall is "K'ouli" or "Kuanli"; all north is outside. The description so applied to the Palisade and the adjoining territories would seem to indicate a Manchurian, as distinct from a Chinese, origin for it, though the time of its erection seems shrouded in mystery, and neither enquiries on the spot, nor consultation of books available at home have yielded me any satisfactory information. This at least must be understood. It is an entirely different structure from the Great Wall that starts from the sea at Shanha'kuan and girdles the northern boundary of the China provinces as far as to Kansu. In this region also we see a number of the ancient watch-towers, that were used in olden days to flash messages from the capital to the provinces and vice-versa. We have similar towers, a continuation from Manchuria, on the old Imperial road that runs past the residence of the present writer at Yungp'ingfu.

Near here we again hear reports of

FORDING THE HSIALINGHO AT CHINCHEW.

MONGOL WIDOW, 82 YEARS OLD; WITH SHAVEN HEAD.
ALSO ONE OF OUR GUIDES.

brigand activity. They are known here by the common name of Hunghutze, and although we find in Chinchoufu one division of Viceroy Yuan's modern army, the day before we reach that city, a poor fellow is held up within ten miles of the city and relieved of the five mules he is driving.

Four miles from Chinchou and in sight of the city we ford the Hsiaolingho, which rising in the hills south of Ta-ch'éngtze, and south east of T'atzekou, flows past this city towards the sea. We ford it a second time just before entering the West gate of the city. Our tramp almost completed, we have the first serious accident of our trip. Riding at walking pace through a small village, my pony steps on a stone, stumbles and falls down, throwing me and falling so heavily on my left leg that for a week or more I can move only with pain. Fortunately no bones are broken, but it seems strange that one should travel over 800 miles of the roughest country that can be looked for without accident, and have to limp painfully along the last four miles of the trip.

Of Chinchoufu I need not say much. It is on the line of railway, and therefore within the bounds of civilization. But it is the largest, busiest, and best of all the cities we met on our tramp. Even Hata must come behind Chinchou. The streets are narrow, but the shops are numerous and good. As in Peking, so here are scores of clean and tidy Peking carts, each drawn by one mule, plying for hire in the streets. A lofty pagoda rises high over the city, though at the time we pass through a heavy gale has somewhat damaged it, rendering necessary some immediate repairs. Viceroy Yuan's soldiers patrol the streets in their smart grey uniform, and young officers with be-gloved hands and clanking swords march past you with a "China-for-the-Chinese" air. In the East suburb, where the better-class people appear to live, every house has a stone frontage painted green. It looks very monotonous to see a long street with such uniform decoration, but it spells substance and means wealth. A fine stone bridge spans the Hsiaolingho somewhat north of the city, while about a mile to the east is the Railway Station, crowded with a motley assembly of the "heathen Chinee," among whom are a great many bold women-beggars. Here we are able to discharge our mules for the very last time; get tickets from the obliging station master on an I.O.U.; and by noon on Thursday, June 7, board the mail train from Newchwang to Shanhaikuan, and sit down, brown and grimy as I am, to a civilized tiffin in the dining-car, and so do the biggest day's trip of all the forty-nine days we have been "on tramp among the Mongols."

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS AND MISSIONARY PROSPECTS.

It remains for me now in a brief concluding article to focus the general impressions of my trip, and give such information on missionary matters as may not be without interest to the general reader.

And, first, a word about the government of the territory. But should it not rather be about the lack of government? For in large tracts of country there is absolutely no official cognisance of either place or people. Nominally under the Chinese officials settled in charge, at the Ch'ihfêng, Chiênp'ing and Fuhsinghsiens the only semblance of authority is found in the Mongol Tama Laoyehs. Their authority is unquestioned and complete. And yet, when need arises, as it so often does owing to the depredations of the bandits, these men are as helpless as their poorer neighbours, and can do no more than assist in the formation of he bands of local militia, already mentioned in this narrative.

So far as military government of the country is concerned, the whole thing is a farce. At Pakou, General Ma has been comfortably settled for the past two years or more, with an army of modern-drilled men, and comprising cavalry and artillery as well as infantry. At T'atzekou, there is one "ying" or battalion (nominally 600 men), of infantry, with a few cavalry. No more of General Ma's troops were met by us until we reached K'ulukou, where, as also at Fuhsingti and Ch'aoyang, we found a company of cavalry. But at Hata and all the wide territory that we touched, east for over 200 miles, and west to Jehol and beyond, the only troops to be met are the rag, tag and bobtail of forces raised by the Tartar-General of Ch'êngtêfu. It is always easier to criticise than to create, and one who, like myself, has but tramped through a country and stayed never more than two days in any one place, should be cautious in condemnation of existing systems of protection for the people. But, giving the most generous consideration to what we learned and saw there, the Chinese government stands convicted of an unrighteous disregard of the claims of its subjects in those regions; and the Chinese troops, of petty persecution and oppression, which make the people wish them far away.

During my trip, Prince Su, whom all foreigners regard as one of the most wise and upright of the Imperial Counsellors, was making a tour of Eastern Mongolia, considerably more extended than was possible to me. From Hata, where he was expected when we left, he was to proceed to Barin, thence to Mukden, investigating the condition of the country and the state of the people. One questions whether even he, earnest though he be for reform, would learn the actual state of affairs. "That divinity which doth hedge about a king" would of

necessity cast some of its halo round the Imperial High Commissioner. Such reports as he did receive would stand very much in danger of being garbled to suit conditions, the conditions rather of the "reporter" than of those reported on. One is not very hopeful, though one waits expectantly, to see improvements following on his visit.

If it were my place to make suggestions, I should say, let the army of General. Ma Yü-k'ün be split up into several portions, and not concentrated in one place, as it practically is at present. Let a strong force be placed in Hata, and distributed round that territory under the most trustworthy officers that can be procured, as far as the Shiramuren. North of this river brigands never go. Population is too sparse to pay highwaymen there. Let one or two of the divisions of the Lu Chün, the creation of H. E. Yuan Shih-k'ai, be removed from Chihli proper, where they are engaged for the most part in "show-pidgin," and sent to Outer Chihli to supplement the forces there. But it must be understood that it is not enough to station such troops in the large cities only. It is the outlying districts that need policing and protecting. One division of Lu Chün already occupies Chinchoufu, and yet in broad daylight, a man is robbed within ten miles of the city the day before we reach it, and the papers tell us within the last few days of a noted banker being seized, held to ransom, and then murdered. Until the central government gives some real attention to the needs of Outer Chihli, no one can call the adminstration efficient. That is putting it very mildly.

As to the Mongol people: Much has been said of their native simplicity of character, and their hospitality in entertaining passing guests. I am convinced that the Mongol, generally speaking, is a simpler, kindlier individual than the average Chinese. As I saw him, he gave me the impression of knowing he belonged to a conquered race. He fears the Chinese, and knows he is no match for them in their adroit scheming and duplicity. He attracts the stranger in a way the Chinese never do, and I for one, have a very warm heart towards him. But I must make clear my feelings about his much-vaunted hospitality. Readers of Abbé Huc and James Gilmour will remember how enthusiastic they become about the hospitality of the Mongols. One hesitates to destroy idols, created by two such men, but my experience is, that hospitality, as an Occidental understands that word, is absolutely unknown in Mongolia. No doubt I was a disadvantage in not knowing their language, and in travelling where foreigners had never before been seen; and it may be that we were more or less unfortunate in the places we stayed at. Yet I would hesitate to say the latter, for we were only once refused admission to a house, and that was for the perfectly justifiable reason of sickness. But I repeat that Mongols do not know what hospitality means, as we understand that word. They suffer you in their homes; they do not welcome you. They are no more glad to see you than you are to see some of the minute insects that crawl about their huts, and make life a misery to you. And they are glad to see you go. They do not make you feel at home in the same sense that a French priest or a British miner living and working in a lonely place would do. It is simply a case that they cannot help themselves, and none of them is possessed of sufficient strength

of character to tell you to move on. Hence they allow you to stay a night in their dirty huts. And next morning they look for the payment that makes the transaction a purely business one, and leaves no sense of obligation on either side. Wherever we stayed, save in one or two of the best Chinese homes —and there it was a question of "face" —we paid well for all we had. In the best homes as well as in the worst, the same thing was true, and some of the best houses proved the worst so far as their cash demands went. At that I make no demur. The traveller would much rather pay than be under obligation to anyone. But that is not hospitality. It is pure business, and unless things are different further away on the plains, one wonders what there is in all the business to arouse so much enthusiasm. For myself, I infinitely prefer a Chinese inn to any Mongol homestead I have seen, for, not to mention other things, the question of securing food sufficient for men and animals proved itself one of the most difficult we had to solve on our trip.

No account of Mongolia would be complete without some special reference to Lamaism, that system of the Buddhist religion which, carried here from Tibet, so completely dominates the Mongol mind and character. Never have I seen a more "religious" people than the Mongols. Their Lama temples are everywhere, none neglected or dilapidated. Every Mongol family has one or more Lamas among its members, the unwritten law being that every second son, and as many more as the nearest Abbot may decide, shall be dedicated from birth to the priestly life. Many of the homes have the Lama altar tended by the old mother or grandmother with shaven head; and the curious little brass censers, like salt-cellars, in which incense is offered, or wine burnt, are among the commonest sights. Daily exercises of devotion are conducted by the Lamas in the temples, consisting of nothing more than the endless but harmonious chanting of the Buddhistic formula, "Pu Sa Arimata." At the temple fairs and festivals, the people come in their thousands, to worship and give, and one can never get away from the fact that here is a land where religion enters into every jot and tittle of daily life.

But—the condition of the Mongol people is a stern condemnation of Lamaism. Of the beautiful self-abnegation of the Indian Prince, these people know nothing. Of the rules of the Order, or the tenets of "the Way", they are deplorably ignorant. The religion has degenerated into a set of "senseless and fatal corruptions which have overwhelmed the ancient Buddhist beliefs," and consists now merely in performance of external formalities that have no power to amend the life, or cleanse the spirit. For the Lamas themselves one can have but little respect. They are the least desirable of their race. Lamaism as practised in Mongolia, is an incubus on the land, economically, morally and religiously.

Economically, it cannot be good that so many able-bodied men should be permitted to live so idle a life as falls to the lot of the Lamas. They congregate in communities and live unproductive, and therefore, worthless lives. They do not work in the fields; they do not even herd the flocks; some few do practise medicine, but it is a case of Heaven help the patient. The only thing they seem to do, is in community to prepare their food from the meal,

etc., that is brought to the temples by their "parishowners." At one place where we stopped for a while, a married Lama was asking me about England, and contrasting what I told him with what is true of China and Mongolia, greatly to the detriment of the latter. I suggested to him that so far as Mongolia was concerned, it was not the land that was at fault, but such as himself who did absolutely nothing to justify their existence. It angered me to see so many idle, hulking fellows with shaven heads and purple robes, idle all day and every day, and I could not forbear giving that home-thrust, which none of them liked. No land could be prosperous and flourishing with such numbers of its male population consecrated to—laziness.

Morally, Lamaism is a curse. One cannot repeat the tales heard of vice and immorality. But anyone who will give five minutes' thought to the subject will easily understand what is meant when I say that the collection of large bodies of young men and lads, strong, healthy, and full-blooded young fellows, under a vow of celibacy, cannot be good for them or the faith they profess.

Religiously, Lamaism is worthless. To "be religious" is not to shut oneself up in a cell, Christian or Buddhistic, or take the unnatural step of joining a celibate community. To "be religious" is not to spend the days and years in endless repetitions of any phrase, however sacred that phrase may be. To "be religious" is to live as a man among men, with a pure heart and a clean life, looking up to God, the giver of all good, for strength to live and do the best we know. And any system which removes men from "the common round, the daily task," with its multitudinous opportunities of service, is to be condemned as violating the sacred claims of brotherhood, and so defeating the altruistic purposes of God. Lama priests will tell you that their duty consists in "nienching" (reading prayers), and "hsiuhao" (cultivating good actions). Ask them for whom the prayers are offered, and whose actions they are seeking to have cultivated, the answer is, their own! So salvation is of, and for, the Lamas only, a species of religion that can only exist side by side with appalling ignorance and rampant superstition. One can admire that wonderful story of selflessness told us of Gautama, and admit with all frankness the theoretical good that Buddhism preaches. But for Lamaism, with its shaven-pated, selfish-hearted, evil-living priests, one can say nothing but that the glory has departed.

And yet it is just this colossal system of Lamaism, bad as it is, that is the most effective obstacle to the Christian missionary, and that almost broke the heart of so brave a man as James Gilmour. The difficulties of evangelising Mongolia are not few. Let me enumerate some:—

1st.—A land of immense distances, involving exposure and expense of a very serious kind:

2ndly.—A population so sparse and scattered that you may travel for a week, and not meet a hundred people:

3rdly.—A people, who, when you have found them, are ignorant, illiterate, and consequently superstitious, needing infinite patience and infinite tact to make any impression at all.

But beyond and above all else, you have to face the fact of Lamaism, which stands like an omnipresent spectre wherever you go in Mongolia. So long as the Lama is there, you can do but little with his lay brother, the black

man. He simply dare not break away from the faith of his country. For a man living on the plains to announce himself a Christian would be to sever himself instantly from his clan and his community. One such only have I known, but what he endured perhaps only God can tell. The Roman Catholics claim to have Mongols among their converts, and old Abbé Huc, sixty years ago, had sanguine hopes of winning both Mongolia and Tibet to Mother Church. But James Gilmour lived and died for Mongolia, yet never baptized a single Mongol into the Christian faith. And it seems to me that the evangelization of Mongolia, will be a task as difficult to the Christian Church and missionary, as the conversion of the Mahommedans is proving.

To learn at first hand, some of the real conditions and prospects of mission work in Eastern Mongolia, was partly the reason for my tramp. I found that Roman Catholic Missions are operating in Pakou, T'atzekou, Hata and away to the north at Maoshantung. How many converts they have I do know, but their plan of insisting on the baptism of whole families, and not of individual members of families, tends to swell their numbers much more quickly than is the case in Protestant Missions. At Pakou, T'atzekou and other smaller places, Protestant missions are at work, but Hata, large and busy centre as it is, yet waits its first Protestant missionary and street chapel. K'ulukou is without a Christian representive, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant, but that is a defect likely to be remedied ere long by the Irish Presbyterian Mission from Hsinminfu. At Ch'ao-yang and Chinchou good work is being done, and the converts are not few. But the great bulk of the districts lies untouched. And the most of the people are absolutely ignorant of the elementary principles of the Christian faith. This is not the place to recommend what should be done to fulfil the Christian obligation, but something needs to be done, and that soon. I am not built on pessimistic lines, and despite all the difficulties that have been named and many others that exist, it is not an extravagant anticipation that some day the "Light of the World" will altogether eclipse the "Light of Asia" in Mongolia. But—and I hope my last sentence will be carefully pondered by such readers as are interested in missionary operations—The Christian Church in China has no greater or more difficult problem to face than this problem of how best to accomplish the evangelization of Mongolia, and to overthrow Lamaism and its attendant superstitions.

PART of CHIH-LI PROVINCE.

Scale 1 = 16 Miles

Miles 16 8 0 16 32 48 64 Miles

Sketch Map to Illustrate
"ON TRAMP AMONG THE MONGOLS"
Showing entire route.

Route of Rev. John Hedley

APPENDIX.

Note to Page 33, on Opium Production and the Attitude of the Chinese Government to the Opium Question :—

"It is only due to the Chinese Government to add that since "the words on page 33 were written, an Edict has been issued "ordaining that both the cultivation and smoking of opium shall "cease in China. In this Edict every friend of China rejoices, and "will sympathetically watch the effort to remove the drug from "common use, within the next ten years."

ERRATA.

Chapter I

Page 8 line 32b ... ... For "power" read "powder."

Chapter II

Title of Chapter ... ... For "T'aptzukou" read "T'atzukou."
Page 15 line 21a ... ... „ "noticed the hairs" read "notices the hair."

Chapter III

Page 25 line 36b ... ... For "within four miles of Chinchoufu" read "seven miles beyond Chaoyangfu."

Chapter V

Page 53 Title of chapter... For "Along to Laoho and Hata" read "Along the Laoho to Hata."

Chapter VII

Page 69 line 2b ... ... For "Yangch'ingho" read "Yangch'angho."
„ 79 „ 32a ... ... „ "Ch'iping" read "Chienp'ing."

Chapter VIII

Page 91 line 13b ... ... For "thirteen" read "thirty."

Chapter XII

Page 114 line 15a... ... For "Fuhsinghsiens the only etc." read "Fuhsinghsiens, the only etc."

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